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CLERGY AND CHURCHWARDENS OF THE DIOCESE
OF PETERBOROUGH

AT HIS THIRD VISITATION, OCTOBER, 1878

BY

WILLIAM CONNOR MAGEE, D.D.

BISHOP OF PETERBOROUGH

LONDON
DALDY, ISBISTER & CO.
56, LUDGATE HILL

1878

1880

100 - 11001

LONDON :
PRINTED BY VIRTUE AND CO., LIMITED,
CITY ROAD.

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A CHARGE,

&c.

REVEREND BRETHREN, BRETHREN OF THE LAITY,

MY first words to you on this occasion are naturally those of congratulation and of thankfulness that we are not meeting amidst the distractions and the horrors of a great European war.

The peril, more than once of late so imminent, of our becoming actors in the strife, of which we have been such anxious spectators, has passed away. So, too, let us hope, are passing away from the lands which have been the scene of that terrible conflict the miseries which it has inflicted, to be succeeded eventually by the blessings of peaceful and well-ordered freedom and civilisation.

As English citizens we have had, and doubtless still have, our differing opinions as to the issues at stake in that conflict, and as to the merits of the settlement by which, for the present at least, it has been terminated; but as Christians, who believe that above the imperfect counsels and erring passions of men there reigns the overruling Providence of God, we can all unite in thankful acknowledgment that it is by His goodness and mercy that we have thus far been spared the trials and the sorrows that must accompany even the most successful of wars.

Thankfulness, however, for our own safety in the presence of the trials of others is a feeling in which we may easily indulge too much and too long. The position, which we have occupied during the last three years, of deeply interested spectators of a contest in which we were resolved to take if possible no part, has not been altogether morally safe or wholesome. Such a position is apt to generate a spirit of selfish regard for our own interests and of growing indifference to losses and sufferings which do not affect these. It tends also to a habit of self-righteous judging of

the faults or the sins of other nations, and a self-satisfied contrasting of them with our own superior virtue and wisdom, to which we are ready to attribute our escape from the calamities which have befallen our neighbours. Such a temper of mind is as dangerous for nations as it is for individuals. It is the pride which so often goes before, because it so often tends to bring about, a fall; blinding us as it does to faults of our own, only too like it may be to those we are condemning in others and leading therefore if uncorrected to like disaster. The human nature which we have seen sinning and suffering in Turk or Bulgarian does not differ so very much from our own that we can afford to neglect the lesson which their sufferings should teach us, that we too are, as a nation, under the moral government of God; and that for our sins, unless we repent and amend, there may be in store as great or greater chastisement than theirs. We would do well to remember that there may be other and worse enemies for nations than those which threaten them from without; that peace may have her crimes, her miseries, as well as war—nay, that these may even prove the more formidable and more lasting of the two. The ignoble love of ease and pleasure; the degrading worship of wealth; the demoralising frauds and dishonesties that come of the fierce haste to possess it; the senseless extravagance of luxury that too often follows on its possession; the effrontery of vice that, flushed with pride and fulness of bread, no longer condescends to pay to virtue even the tribute of hypocrisy; the low cynicism that sneers away all those better thoughts and higher aims that are the very breath of a nation's nobler life; and—springing out of these—the strife of interests; the war of classes widening and deepening day by day, as the envious selfishness of poverty rises up in natural reaction against the ostentatious selfishness of wealth; the dull, desperate hate with which those who want and have not, come at last to regard the whole framework of society which seems to them but one huge contrivance for their oppression; the wild dreams of revolutionary change which shall give to all alike, without the pain of labour and self-denial, those enjoyments which are now the privileged possession of the few, but which the many long for with a bitter and a persistent longing:—these are some of the seeds of evil which, sown in our own soil and by our own hands, may one day rise up an exceeding great army more to be dreaded than the invading hosts of any foreign foe. The glare and the glitter of our modern civilisation may hide these from our view for a time; we may fail to see how some of the most precious elements of our national greatness are withering in its heated atmosphere, or what evil things are growing to maturity in the darker shadows that it casts; but they are there nevertheless, and if we heed them not and reform them not, the time may come when we may wish that the sharp and sobering discipline of war—nay, even the terrible trials and sorrows of defeat—had visited us in time to save us from

the greater horrors bred of our own sins in time of profoundest ease and peace.

It is well that we should remember this. It is well that we, my reverend brethren, while we pray, and teach our people to pray, that God may "give us peace in our time," should never fail to warn them that this good gift of God, like all His other gifts, may prove a blessing or a curse according to the use we make of it.

In the protracted and bitter controversies which this Eastern question has provoked amongst ourselves, the clergy generally have taken but little part. This has been made matter of reproach against them by those who, on other occasions, are ready enough to denounce "the political parson," and who would doubtless have raised the same cry on this occasion, had the clergy taken a line opposed to their own. This neutrality of the clergy has not, I am persuaded, sprung, as their accusers allege, from indifference to considerations of justice and humanity, or from servile adherence to the powers that be. The clergy, like other men, have their political predilections; but it is as great a calumny to say that these have constrained the majority of them of late to a cowardly silence against their own better convictions, as it would be to say of those who did speak strongly on one side of this question, that their utterances were prompted by their political leanings or interests, and not by their conscientious belief that they were aiding the cause of the oppressed against the wrong-doer. A better and a truer reason for the silence of the great body of the clergy in the late, as in other, political controversy, is to be found in their general unwillingness to mix themselves up with the strifes of political parties, an unwillingness which seems to me both natural and right on the part of those who occupy the position of ministers of a National Church. The clergyman of the Church of England is the pastor of all his parishioners, to whatever party in the State they may belong, and he does well, as a rule, to avoid, as far as possible, identifying himself with any one of these parties, lest by so doing he weaken his spiritual influence over any of his people.

It is easy to denounce this neutral attitude of the clergy in politics as selfish and cowardly, and to adduce it as a proof of the numbing and deadening influence of an establishment which induces its ministers to neglect their rights and duties as citizens. The answer to all this is very simple. The duties of an English clergyman, who is an officer of the State as well as of the Church, are duties of a citizen, as truly as are those of a judge or a soldier; like these they may clash with other duties to which he is not professionally bound, and in this as in every other case of conflicting claims of duty, the only question to be decided is, which are to be paramount and which subordinate. A soldier,

for instance, would hardly be justified in absenting himself from an engagement in order to vote at an election; or a judge in neglecting an assize in order to speak at a political meeting. And the clergy may, I trust, be pardoned if they regard the duties of the pastor as higher than those of the politician. There may, of course, be cases where the political question at stake involves such clear issues of morality or justice that it may be the plain duty of the minister of religion to utter his testimony boldly and loudly for the right and against the wrong. Such an issue, for instance, was involved in the question of the slave trade. Such an issue many conscientious men believe is now involved in the question of legislative dealings with intemperance. But such issues should, I venture to think, be clear and unmistakable before they induce the pastor of an English parish to forsake the quiet duties of his calling for the arena of political strife. I trust that I shall not be supposed, in saying this, to cast the slightest reflection upon those of the clergy who felt it their duty to take an active part in the press or on the platform on this Eastern question. I have not a doubt that those who did so were fully persuaded that this was just one of those cases where the call to political action was one of highest and clearest moral obligation. But they would, I trust, in their turn be ready to admit that a question on which the English nation was and is so largely divided, and on which men of the highest and purest character took opposite sides, cannot have appeared to all alike the simple question of right or wrong which it seemed to them; and that those of their brethren in the Ministry who did not follow their example of active interference in it, may nevertheless have been as keenly alive as they were to the interests of humanity and of freedom, though they may have differed from them in their judgment, or may have honestly felt themselves unable to form a judgment, as to how far those interests might be promoted or hindered by any particular course which statesmen on either side might urge or adopt.

That the clergy were thus largely neutral in this Eastern question, while on the other hand Nonconformist ministers took an active part exclusively on one side of it, is a fact which we have been assured must have an ill effect upon the political future of our Church. It may be so, though it seems to me that the forces engaged in the contest for and against the Establishment lie too deep to be greatly affected by such a superficial and passing stimulus as this. But that this contest will be renewed with increased eagerness, and it may be on the part of our assailants with increased confidence, now that the excitement of foreign politics is giving place to renewed interest in domestic legislation, is tolerably certain. It may be well for us then, on the eve of the renewal of a struggle in which we have so deep an interest, to attempt calmly to estimate the nature and the direction of the forces arrayed against us, and to consider how it behoves us to deal with them.

And when I ask you to do this it is, believe me, with no thought of engaging you in anything so unedifying or so unsuited to this place and occasion, as the calculation of political chances, or the suggestion of political strategy on the part of members of our Church. I desire rather, if I may, to lift this question of the Church and her assailants out of the level of mere party politics, and to see if we can find in it some considerations which may help us in the discharge of our duties as ministers of religion, and which may guard us, too, against some possible mistakes of conduct or temper to which, as ministers of the National Church, we may be at this moment especially exposed. For a protracted contest, such as that into which we are being forced, resembles a protracted law suit in this respect, that he who is engaged in it has to think not only how he may best defend the interests involved in it, but also how he may best protect himself from the injurious and distracting effects of it upon his own heart and life.

Attitude of the
Church towards
political assail-
ants.

Speaking generally then, and without taking note of partial or individual exceptions, there are three forces in modern society which are united in the attack now being made upon the National Church. These are Sectarianism, Infidelity, and Democracy. There are, it is true, still here and there philosophical thinkers of the more advanced school of politics, who advocate the theory of a National Church of a very undogmatic character; and there are even one or two infidel writers who have had something to say for such a Church on the ground of public utility; and there is still a section, though a diminishing one, of the Nonconformists who deprecate, or at least will not yet agitate for, the severance of Church and State. But looking at the broader and deeper currents of these three forces, they are setting distinctly and strongly against the Church.

In the first place then as regards the political assault of Dissent upon the Church, it is to be regarded as both natural and inevitable. It is true that Dissent in its earlier stages had no such hostility, and that what Nonconformists long aimed at was not the abolition of the Establishment, but room or triumph in it for themselves. Such facts, however, only prove that there is that, either in the essential spirit or the outward circumstances of Nonconforming religious communities, which forces them sooner or later to discard the principles of an Establishment and adopt in their stead those of Voluntaryism. Modern Dissenters are therefore as little troubled by our quotations in favour of Establishments from Owen, or Howe, or Baxter, as modern Wesleyans are by our quotations in favour of the Church from Wesley's sermons. They tell us fairly enough that all these quotations only show that they understand their own principles now better than they did at first, and that if they were Voluntaryists once against their will, they have since learned to be Voluntaryists on principle.

We may therefore calculate on the whole political strength of modern Dissent being finally cast into the scale against the Church Establishment. Now if we were to speculate, as I do not propose to do, as to the probabilities of the success of this movement, we might say that these were far from being so hopeful as its leaders regard them.

It may be doubted whether Dissent has not lost more than it has gained by the intensely political character which it has of late been acquiring; whether in the end the spiritual forces in any country may not prove, even in the field of politics, the most powerful of all; and whether, therefore, even on the low ground of political expediency, the Church has not chosen the wiser course in devoting to spiritual and pastoral work among the masses of the people the time and the energies which her assailants are expending in stirring up those masses against her.

My object, however, is, as I have said, not to indulge in speculations of this nature, but rather to invite you to consider what may be the effect at this moment upon the tone and temper of Churchmen, and especially upon us of the clergy, of these persistent political assaults upon our Church. May we not fear then that these may produce in us a hard unyielding temper, a tendency to insist with the utmost tenacity on the very smallest points in dispute between us and our opponents, and to our justifying this on the ground that nothing we can say or do will avail to conciliate them, and that to make any concession, whether reasonable or unreasonable in itself, must have the appearance of weakness, and can only serve therefore to encourage further attacks? Are we not liable, in such a tone of mind, to forget that charity, generosity, concession to the weakness and the prejudices of others, are in themselves Christian duties, and that they are duties especially incumbent upon the ministers of a great and privileged Church, which, just because it is great and strong, should strive to show itself large-hearted and charitable, and above the petty jealousies which are the bane of smaller communities? Above all things is it not incumbent upon us to show that we value our rights and privileges, whatever they may be, not selfishly for our own sakes, but for the sake of those greater interests they were meant to promote; and to take care that we give no colour to the accusation so freely brought against us, that we care more for the Church than we do for Christianity?

Let me venture upon an illustration of what I have been saying on this point, though in so doing I am well aware that I am treading upon delicate ground, and that what I am about to say will not be popular with many who now hear me.

The demands of the Dissenters in the Burials question are clearly and indeed avowedly urged on political grounds and with ulterior political aims, and they are based, as most of us

Churchmen think, upon no shadow of justice or right whatever. I for one have never been able to see how the fact that a man has seceded from the National Church gives him a right which no member of that Church possesses, to say what he pleases in the parish churchyard any more than in the parish church. Nor can I see how any such right can be conferred on any one—Churchman or Dissenter—by the fact, even if it were one, that churchyards are national property, any more than the fact of the Houses of Parliament being national property confers upon every citizen the right to say what he pleases in them, or even to enter them save at certain times and under certain conditions. It seems to me therefore that Churchmen are and have been perfectly justified in resisting the attempt to obtain this imaginary right by the force of legislation. But, on the other hand, I have always held that there are concessions which the Church, while retaining still her rights over her own graveyards, might have made, not in the least as a matter of political expediency or in the vain hope of buying off her assailants, but simply on the grounds of Christian charity and kindness, and of doing to others as we would have them do to us. I have never been able to see the harm or the danger to the Church, in the clergyman allowing the Christian mourner, or even the minister selected by him, to utter, by the grave of some loved one just laid to rest, words of prayer or praise. I have never been able to see why the clergyman should not himself be allowed to speak at the grave of the child of a Christian parent, who, however mistakenly, may have delayed for him the rite which admits to the Christian Church, words of sure and certain hope or of consolation to surrounding mourners, even though he might not and ought not to use the service which is framed exclusively for the baptized.

Now in saying this I am well aware that I expose myself to the disapproval of those who maintain that such concessions on the part of the Church would be utterly wrong in point of principle. To such I can only say, so long as you think this you are bound in conscience to refuse to make them; you must stand by your principles at whatever cost of pain to others or to yourself. But if there be any, and I believe there are not a few, who, while they see nothing wrong in principle in such concessions, refuse to make them on the ground that they will never conciliate the political Dissenter, or that it is politically wiser to stand up at this moment against all concession, then I say to such men you are falling precisely into that fault of which you accuse the Dissenter, of preferring political to religious considerations; you are making in this matter just as real, if not as great, a mistake as he who, believing that there was a principle involved in such concession, should nevertheless make it in order to “conciliate the Dissenter.”

That a National Church should be specially obnoxious to the Infidel is a matter of course, while at the same time it is no small proof of the real value of such an institution. It is in his eyes, however, a national provision for the maintenance and the spread of opinions which he regards as equally false and pernicious. The clergy are for him a band of obscurantists, whose interests are bound up with the defence of superstition and the obstruction of free thought; and accordingly he denounces the Church as the great obstacle in this country to the progress of humanity. We must expect, therefore, that the whole force of unbelief will be cast against the National Church in every question which in any way involves the interests of religion. Now at this moment this force is directed against the Church mainly upon one point—that of education. The secularist party in the State, intensely desiring as it does the complete secularization of the centres of thought and learning in the nation, seeks eagerly to oust the Church from her old position in these as the representative of Christianity, and in this attempt it has, as we know, succeeded to a considerable extent. Now there is, as it seems to me, a danger here that the Church, wearied out in the struggle for religion in education which she has been waging, not for herself but for the nation, should withdraw from it at last; and, leaving the ground he has won to the secularist, should set herself simply to the religious training of her own children in her own institutions.

To this the Church may be forced at last, but let her wait until she is forced to it. The Church of the nation ought surely never to divest herself, of her own free will, of her great function of leavening, so far as she may, the thought and intellect of the nation with the truths of religion. She ought, on the contrary, if she be faithful to her trust, to seize and cling to every opportunity given or left to her of discharging this office, whether in the primary, middle-class, or university education of the people.

Let me illustrate my meaning on this subject by referring to the point in connection with it which most practically concerns us in this diocese. I mean the position of the Church with respect to primary education. In the great education controversy of the last few years the Church, wisely accepting the conditions of the State, has won for herself the right to teach in her own schools the whole faith of the gospel to all who will accept it at her hands; and it is also largely owing to her efforts that this faith has not been entirely excluded from the State schools throughout the country. There is still room, if there be no very high or secure place, for religion left in these. This being so, what is the duty of the Church respecting these schools? Not surely to stand entirely aloof from them and leave them to drift, as they would in that case certainly drift, more and more into mere secularism. Is it not rather the duty of Churchmen, while strenuously maintaining their own better system, still, wherever these schools exist,

to try and find their place in them ; and moreover in so doing to accept loyally the conditions of the system, in the working of which they are taking part, trying only to infuse into it as much of religious teaching and influence as those conditions will allow ; showing clearly that they are doing this in the interests not of the Church but of Religion, and winning thus, it may be, at last the sympathy and co-operation of those who, though not members of our communion, still care more for serving Religion than they do for injuring the Church? It seems to me that this is both a wiser and a manlier course than that Churchmen should set themselves merely to denouncing all board schools as "nurseries of irreligion," or that they should try to thwart and cripple them, where they have been established, by ill-advised appeals to the ratepayers against them in the name of economy ; a piece of strategy which in one notable instance has resulted only in a damaging defeat to the Church, and in giving opportunity for the accusation against the clergy that they are the pretended friends but real opponents of the education of the people.

Doubtless it is hard upon Churchmen that they should have the burden of supporting their own schools and at the same time of trying to increase the efficiency of others. But this is a burden incidental to the position of the Church as the religious servant of the nation. She may not shrink from it if she be faithful—she will not shrink from it if she be wise. For if the time should ever come when she should be forced to surrender her schools to the State—and the process of surrender is certainly going on already—she may have good cause for thankfulness should the system of State education to which her children were at last transferred have meanwhile been kept, as far as she could keep it, free from the taint of secularism. For this reason I hail with satisfaction the effort that has been made in this diocese to give religious instruction to pupil teachers in board schools. Such efforts may meet with unpleasant rebuffs, but they are wise and right in themselves, and I trust they may be persevered in.

That the spirit of modern democracy is strongly hostile to our Church is certain. To inquire into all the reasons for this would take us far beyond the limits of my present subject ; the question runs out into the far larger and deeper one of the hostility of modern political thought in its more advanced forms, not only to established Churches, but to Christianity itself. This, which is indeed one of the gravest and most startling phenomena in our modern civilisation, may well occupy the serious and anxious consideration not only of all Churchmen, but of all Christian men. It is obviously, however, one which it would be impossible for me to discuss on this occasion. What I ask you to consider to-day is simply the question, how in the face of this fact we ministers of the National Church should bear ourselves? Whether anything that

Democratic
hostility to the
Church.

we can do may lessen, or on the other hand increase, this feeling, the existence of which we must honestly admit and recognise?

In the first place, then, there is one thing which we clearly ought not to do, namely to attempt to combat this political attack by merely political weapons; to aim for instance at strengthening the Church by allying ourselves and her more and more closely with those powers in the State which are most opposed to democracy. To do this could in the end only have the effect of deepening the hostility we deplore, and of giving colour to the accusation already unjustly made against us, that the parson is the natural ally of the rich and the great, and the enemy of the people. There is, however, an error of an exactly opposite nature into which the clergy may be tempted, namely, that not of resisting the democracy, but of trying to disarm it by divesting themselves in their character as clergymen of whatever they may see to be especially offensive to the people. For instance, the clergyman may attempt to meet the cry against sacerdotalism, by surrendering those lawful claims of spiritual authority with which the Church has invested him, by preaching an undogmatic Christianity, by depreciating theology, by secularising as far as possible his whole tone of teaching and life in order to show how truly liberal and unsectarian the minister of an Established Church may be. Such a pandering to the worst prejudices of the people—to say nothing of its unfaithfulness—fails of its own end; by none is it seen through more quickly than by those whom it seeks to win; they know perfectly well that the Prayer Book which this undogmatic and unsectarian clergyman reads every Sunday makes of him something more and something else than what he affects to be; and they thoroughly despise accordingly the man who thinks to please them by playing false to it. Let me not, however, be mistaken here. I am not presuming in what I have just said to judge those of our clergy who in the honest dread of the spirit of sacerdotalism may have gone, as some think, too far in the opposite direction: amongst such men are some of the noblest spirits of our Church. I am speaking only of attempts at winning popularity, if not for one's self, for the Church, by teaching which it is hard even with the utmost stretch of charity to reconcile with loyalty to the Prayer Book or to the Bible.

This, however, though it is seen here and there amongst us, is a fault to which the clergy of our Church as a body are not given. Our greatest danger lies the other way. It is that not of undue depreciation, but of undue exaltation of the claims and powers of the priesthood, and that not for our own sakes, but for the sake of the Church, which many may think needs to be thus spiritually strengthened in proportion as her temporal powers and privileges are assailed. This motive has been pleaded, and I have no doubt quite honestly pleaded, in defence of those "Ritualistic excesses" on the part of certain of the clergy which are causing

just now so much anxiety to many of us. Noting as they do the patent fact of the alienation of large masses of the people from the Church, and remembering that this has not always been so; recalling with a fond regret, how in the days before the Reformation the Church and her priesthood held the people in loyal allegiance, and forgetful of the fact that it was in those very days that the superstitious errors and extravagant usurpations of the Church were sowing those seeds of infidelity which have since ripened to such terrible maturity; they have persuaded themselves that if they could but restore the "Faith of our fathers," they would regain for the Church all of that allegiance which in their opinion she has lost by departing from that faith. Accordingly, they are attempting what is really neither more nor less than the revival of mediæval Christianity in all the old splendour of its ritual, and in all the beliefs which that ritual is supposed to symbolize. And they boast, and not without some show of reason, that they are thus succeeding in winning back the people to the Church. They point, and their defenders, even where they do not altogether sympathize with them, point to their work amongst the poor in the poorest and most neglected parts of our great cities, to their crowded churches and attached followers amongst the working classes, and they ask us, is the Church of England so strong amongst the people that she can afford to dispense with such help as this?

Now I will not stop to inquire how much of this success is owing to their ritual, and how much to what all must admit to be their self-denying lives amongst and for the people. Nor will I ask how far—granting even that this success is owing to their teaching and their ritual—such teaching and ritual are lawful for them in their present position as ministers of the Reformed Church of England, and whether therefore they are free to purchase popularity for her at the price of her purity. But I will ask them to consider whether after all they may not be mistaking a partial and temporary success for a large and enduring one—whether they may not be alienating from the Church by their proceedings more than they are attracting. Naturally they see more of those whom they attract than of those whom they alienate. They take no heed of the scornful contempt with which the great body of English working men regard their proceedings, nor of their deepening estrangement from the Church which allows of these; or if they do, they regard it only as a sign of the infidel spirit of the times, which they must aim at conquering by stronger and still stronger assertion of what they regard as the Catholic faith in its integrity of doctrine and worship.

Let us test, however, the real value of this experiment, by noting its result where it has been tried upon the large scale and for a long time. The Church of Rome, whose doctrines these

men are reviving and whose practices they are imitating, has enjoyed all the advantages which these are supposed to confer, and has enjoyed them during all those years in which our Church has been deprived of them. If imposing ceremonial, if pictures and banners and incense and processions and pilgrimages, if the highest assertion of the claims of the priest and of the authority and value of the confessional could have secured the allegiance of the people, she has had all these in a degree which we can never hope to rival. What has been the result? Simply this, that she has lost her hold of the people all over Europe to a far larger extent, and far more hopelessly, than the Church of England has done, or is likely to do. There is surely far more both of practical and speculative infidelity in those countries which have been since the Reformation under her sway, than there is in England at this moment. Is it then, apart from all other considerations, a course so wise as some seem to regard it, this of borrowing the weapons of Rome, just as we see them breaking and falling from her hands? Would not the result of the experiment, if it were ever largely tried by our Church here, be the same as it has been with her, namely the establishing of a narrow spiritual despotism over the few, at the cost of a deep and wide-spread spiritual revolt on the part of the many; the severance of the Church from the intelligence and the life of the people; her certain rejection from her office of national teacher; and, what is even more to be dreaded, the spread of unbelief and irreligion through the nation at large which would only too probably follow its divorce from the Church, not on grounds of politics but of religion—not because the nation had come to think that Christianity might be taught without a National Church, but because the National Church had forced it to doubt whether Christianity was worth being taught at all? Of course, if those of the clergy who are thus attempting to revive what the Church of England has disowned and rejected as we think—or unhappily neglected as they think—believe that they are setting forth to the world really and truly her doctrines and the very truth of God besides, they must continue to do so at any cost or at any hazard to themselves or to her position as an Established Church; and God forbid that I should urge on them the thought of any such risk as a motive against giving effect to the convictions of their consciences. I am only urging on them now that they are under the saddest of infatuations if they suppose that they are in this way serving the Church by regaining for it the affections of the people at large. I am only entreating those of the clergy who may be disposed, on this ground at least, to sympathize with or to adopt these practices, to consider whether in so doing they may not be making a great and a dangerous mistake as regards the interests both of the Church and of religion in this country.

There is, however, a course which we of the clergy may take to

attach the people to the Church, a wiser as well as a simpler one than that of attempting to alter her character and teaching in one direction or another. It is that of trying fully to realise these and to display them in their truest and most attractive form.

The Church of England, whatever be her faults, has in her, as she is at this time, and would have still more if her own principles were fully carried out, larger elements of a truly National and, therefore, really popular Church, than any other in Christendom. With her citizen clergy, owning no foreign allegiance and not severed as a celibate caste from their fellow-citizens; with her Bible and her Prayer Book in "the vulgar tongue understood of the people;" with her moderate claims for spiritual authority; with her large comprehensiveness and tolerance of diversity of thought in all things non-essential; with her endowments not drawn from the people but used for them; with her rank and privileges held on stringent conditions of public service, and open to the acquirement of the poorest and humblest member of the community; she might hope, if any Church can hope, to reconcile the opposition between modern democratic thought and the Christian Church. It may be her good fortune to do this; but it is at any rate our duty to see that she fail not in this through any fault on the part of her clergy.

Let us try if we cannot show to the people the English parish priest as he ought to be, the servant, for his Master's sake, of every man in his parish, whatever his rank or condition; neither proud to the poor nor servile to the great; never ashamed of his office, yet never lording himself in the strength of it over God's heritage; bold to rebuke the vices of the highest as well as of the lowest; truly honouring all men with the courtesy that comes from seeing in every one a member of Christ and an heir of heaven; approving himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God. Let us learn, in these respects, from the rude criticisms of our assailants. They are often unjust, often ignorant; they are sometimes shrewd and just; let us profit by them when they are so; let us amend what they show us to be really amiss; let us supply what is lacking; let us strengthen the things that are ready to die; and when we have done this, we may plead the more effectually with those with whom our lives shall have already pleaded for our Church. We may ask them, for instance, to consider whether there is anything so very lordly and aristocratic in the position which enables the son of a day-labourer to stand up before the greatest man in the parish and say his mind without fear or favour; or which, on the other hand, places the son of a peer at the call of the day-labourer. We may ask—thank God that we can now so often safely do so!—whether there is anything so exclusive in the Church which throws open her places of worship to the people equally and without money or price to all alike; we may ask whether the sacerdotalism they are taught so much to dread be not

checked rather than promoted by the compact of the Church with the State which they accuse as the cause of it; or whether, if democracy be that form of government which most depends upon the co-operation of all citizens, and therefore needs the largest amount of virtue and self-restraint amongst its citizens, it be not that form of government which, above all others, needs and may profit by an establishment which brings the teacher of morality and religion within the reach of every citizen; nay, which binds it on him as his duty to press his teaching upon those who, because they most need, most dislike it, instead of supplying it only to those who, because they like it, are ready to pay for it. We may or we may not in so doing save the Establishment, and I for one am not ashamed to say that this were no unworthy achievement, but we should at any rate have justified it; we should at any rate have saved the Church, established or disestablished, endowed or disendowed, to do God's work amongst the people; we should have saved our country that deadly struggle between superstition and infidelity, between the priest and the revolution, which is distracting other countries, and which is already, as some declare, beginning to cast its coming shadow on our own.

Duty of the
Clergy to the
Establishment.

In all that I have been saying, however, on this subject of the assaults upon the Establishment, and the best way in which we of the clergy may meet them, I have assumed that the Establishment is "worth preserving." If it be not, of course all that I have been saying is mere waste of your time and mine. More than this even, if it be not worth our while to preserve it, it is worth our while, it is our plain duty, to get rid of it; for certainly, if it be not a very good thing it is a very bad one. The influences upon the Church of her union with the State must, in the nature of the case, be powerful and far reaching; they must deeply penetrate her whole organization, and largely mould her whole tone and character and spirit; they are, therefore, either an immense help or an immense hindrance to that spiritual work for which she exists. Let us make up our minds which they are, and act accordingly. If we are clearly satisfied that on the whole they are, as some of our clergy are telling us just now, mischievous to the spiritual life of the Church, and "contrary to the mind and will of God," our course is very clear. It is first, as honest men, to resign the positions and the emoluments we hold as ministers of an Establishment, refusing any longer to live by what we ought, in that case, to regard as the wages of sin; and then having gone forth from it, to wage war for its overthrow. But if, on the other hand, we are convinced that the union between Church and State is right and lawful in principle, and that whatever be the partial disadvantages attending it—and there is nothing human that has not its share of these—yet that these are far less than its advantages to the Church, and that the abolition of this union

would not help but would cripple her in her great work for God; then let us resolve to do what in us lies to maintain that union, and with it the blessings we believe it brings to Church and nation. But let us in either case avoid, what is so utterly unbecoming in clergymen of the National Church, an affectation of indifference to this question, a tone of depreciation of the whole controversy as one merely about loaves and fishes, about secular rights and privileges quite unworthy of the serious thought of spiritual men, who may afford to wait the issues of this struggle with perfect complacency, satisfied that in no way the real interests of the Church be affected by it. The real interests of the Church, in the very highest sense of the word, must be deeply affected by it, either for good or for evil. Wealth and influence are as much and as truly God's gifts to a Church as they are to individuals, and, neither by the individual nor by the Church, are they to be lightly thrown away, nor yet, on the other hand, so cherished that we keep them at the cost of things more precious. If our endowments, our privileges, or anything else in our position as a National Church, be really a talent given us of God, then we shall have to answer to Him for casting these away. And if we really doubt whether these are a trust of such a nature, have we any right to retain them? They are certainly given us as such a trust by both Church and nation. The union of Church and State surely was intended for the spiritual good of both. If we doubt this, have we any right to retain our position as trustees appointed under that trust? Such a position would not be tolerable or tolerated in the ordinary affairs of life. The first duty of a trustee who finds himself, for whatever reason, growing indifferent to the duties involved in his trust, is to make way for some one else who may be more fully sensible of their importance. Let us have done then, once for all, with this affectation of impartiality on a question on which no English Churchman, no English citizen, has any right to be impartial. Let us have done, too, with what we hear rather too much of just now, peevish cries for disestablishment and threats of seeking for it, whenever men cannot have everything their own way in the Church, or whenever they see, or think they see, defects or evils in the present state of Church matters. It is the commonest thing nowadays to hear from some angry layman, who cannot at once get his Incumbent to do all he thinks he ought to do, or be all he ought to be, the declaration, that if the Bishop cannot put this to rights for him, it is time he were disestablished; or from some angry clergyman, vexed with some restraint in his position, as minister of a Church established by law, that at the moment particularly galls him, the exclamation that it were a thousand times better to be disestablished than to put up with this. All this is really childish, and worse than childish; it is the conduct of men who would burn down some grand old family mansion

in order to get rid of a dark passage or a smoky chimney. But when I say this, I say also what, indeed, I have been endeavouring hitherto to show, that the truest and best defence of the Establishment on the part of the clergy lies in their own life and work as parish priests. It is well for us that this is so, for we could imagine nothing more unfortunate than that the clergy of our Church should be distracted in their great work for God or warped in the doing of it by considerations of how the manner of it might affect the fate of the contest waged against the Establishment; thinking always how they may increase the numerical strength of the Church, or prevent this or that member of their flock, who may after all be no great strength or credit to us, from going over to Dissent; relaxing the discipline of the Church, already far too lax, lowering the standard of her teaching in Church or in school, lest they swell the ranks of the Church's opponents; viewing their work, in short, always more or less under this angle of disestablishment, and forgetting that the best way of strengthening the Church is by faithfully, loyally, and thoroughly carrying out her principles and doing her work in her own spirit and way. "He that regardeth the clouds shall not sow," and he that is always scanning the political sky and calculating the coming weather for the Establishment will never be a good husbandman for the Church.

Duty of the Laity
to the Church.

I have said that the life and the work of the clergyman is the best defence of the Church; but these are not her only defence. The clergy are not the Church. This is a truth of which our brethren of the laity sometimes remind us when they think we are in danger of assuming too much for our order. And very right and very well it is that they should remind us of this. But will our brethren of the laity bear with me when I remind them that this truth has two sides to it? If the laity are as truly a part of the Church as the clergy, they are so for work and duty as well as for privilege and right; they, too, as well as the clergy, have their duty of strengthening the Church, and that in her capacity, not as an Establishment, but as a spiritual society. Political help our brethren of the laity are ready to give the Church; their money, too, is largely at her service. A Church which in one generation has raised thirty millions for church building and restoration, and fifteen millions for her schools, has certainly no reason to complain of the niggardliness of her laity. But this is not all that the Church needs of her lay members. Their co-operation with the clergy in work and counsel is required, too, and this I am thankful to say is increasingly given, though there is room here for improvement. I confess that I am sometimes tempted to wish that a little more of the energy, the zeal, the organizing power that we see devoted to business or to pleasure could be enlisted in the service of the Church. But there is a support which the Clergy need from the laity in their spiritual

work which is even more important than any of these ; it is the moral support of a good example. The laity tell us, and tell us truly, that they value the Church mainly because she provides in every parish the means of grace, and the ministrations of the clergy. Do they always try to show that they value these privileges for themselves as well as for others ; or is the example of neglect of these never set by laymen, who yet would be grievously offended if they were told they were not well affected to the Church ? Is it no hindrance to the parish priest, in bringing the humbler classes to frequent the house of God, to know that his principal parishioner is either an habitual absentee from it or a rare and unfrequent visitor there ? Is it no difficulty to the minister of the Church, as he tries to win back the Nonconformist or convert the unbeliever, to be told, it will be time enough to try and convert us to your Church when your own people show that they believe in her ? Let me entreat the lay Churchmen of all ranks and classes in the diocese, who may be lacking in this respect, and to whom I speak, if not in yet from this place, to bear with this word of exhortation from one who as truly owes to them the duty of faithfulness as he does to the clergy ; to consider what real hurt to the Church may be caused by their neglect of their duties as Churchmen ; and to remember for their own sake, and for the sake of those who are to come after them, that God's great law for the possession of His gifts is true always, and everywhere, that "from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he seemeth to have," and that those who do not care to use the blessings of the Church may end in losing them.

For after all, let us consider what this Church of England—of which we so often speak and write, as if it were an abstract something apart from ourselves—really is. It is simply ourselves, clergy and laity, bound together as members of a great spiritual society which exists for one great end and purpose, the deepening of the spiritual life of the nation. The endowments and the privileges which that society possesses are only means to that great end, and it holds them only on the condition that it use them for that purpose. They belong to the Church by a like tenure to that by which land and rank were held of old in this realm of England, namely, that of furnishing men when needed for the service of the State. The National Church is bound in deepest obligations to the nation to furnish it with faithful soldiers and servants to encounter every one of the enemies of its moral and spiritual life, to fight against every form of unbelief or of sin that may assault and hurt the people. For this her bounden duty and service she needs the help of every one of her sons, whether of the clergy or of the laity, and the Churchman who withholds that help, or only slackly and coldly gives it, is proving himself faithless to a great trust and neglectful of a plain duty which he owes alike to the Church of which he is a member and to the nation of

which he is a citizen. If we ever forget this, if we ever come to regard the rights of the Church merely as rights, and not also as most high and solemn responsibilities, entailing upon every one of us real and pressing duties and efforts, then whether we keep those rights or not we shall certainly deserve to lose them; we shall certainly be inviting and provoking men to rise up and sweep away from amongst them what would then indeed have become a monopoly of useless and therefore mischievous privilege; nay, we should be inviting and provoking for ourselves the lesson from God which the loss of these things might bring us, that the life of the Church "consisteth not in the abundance of the things" that she possesseth. These are truths, brethren, which, obvious as they are in themselves, are only too easily forgotten in the heat and excitement of a contest for temporal rights and privileges such as that which it may be ere long awaits the Church; I have ventured, therefore, thus strongly to press them upon your consideration, and to ask you to remember, what I trust that for myself I may ever bear in mind, that the Establishment exists for the sake of that great spiritual society which we know as the Church of England, and for the work which that society has to do for the people of England; and that though the Church if she were spiritually vigorous and strong would long survive the Establishment, yet that the Establishment cannot, nor should we desire that it could, long survive the decay of spiritual life in the Church.

And now let us pass from the consideration of the duties of clergy and laity as affected by their position as members of a National Church to the question, How these duties are being accomplished amongst us in this diocese? It is my task on such an occasion as this to pass in review before you the history of our diocesan work in the interval since the last visitation. It furnishes, I am thankful to say, much proof of steady and hopeful progress. The number of churches restored within the last three years has been thirty-five, and of new churches built, four; and the sum total of the expenditure on Church buildings and restorations amounts to £99,621. In the same period there have been thirty-three schools built or enlarged at a cost of £15,103, making a total expended upon churches and schools of £114,724, or at the rate of a little more than £38,000 a year.

The work of Church extension, which in this diocese is not so urgently needed as in some others, has prospered as much as could reasonably have been expected during a period of such stagnation and depression in business as the last three years have been. In Leicester two new churches have been completed, and one new parish created and endowed. Loughborough has gained a new church with its endowment. And in Northampton, of the four new parishes which I told you of in my last Visitation we

Diocesan
Statistics.

Church Exten-
sion.

contemplated providing, we have created and endowed two; a third, for which we have built a handsome and commodious church, is now waiting its endowment from the Commissioners. Sites have been obtained and temporary churches provided for all four. And in all four I am happy to say clergymen have been for some time working zealously and successfully.

As regards the services of the Church I note again with thankfulness a steady increase in their number and frequency. The number of churches in which Ascension-day is observed has risen from 463 to 504; and the number of those in which Holy Communion is celebrated monthly or more frequently has risen from 429 to 470; while the list of those having it less frequently than once a month, has fallen from 123 to 80. Of these only one is returned as marked by the discreditable peculiarity of an administration only three times in the year; that is to say, no oftener than the clergyman can possibly avoid celebrating, without rendering himself liable to legal penalties. There may, however, be a few others in which this practice still prevails, inasmuch as there are sixteen churches which have made no return on this point. I should be sorry, however, to suppose that all of these are to be placed in this unhappy category, and I may therefore safely and thankfully assume that this most grievous form of spiritual neglect has almost vanished from this diocese.

Church
Services.

That there should still, however, be no less than 80 churches in which the Lord's Supper is administered less frequently than once a month, is matter for grave regret. And I should not be dealing faithfully with those of my reverend brethren who are still halting in this respect, if I did not call their attention to this defect, and earnestly entreat its amendment. I am thankful to observe the increase of special services in Lent and Advent, and the efforts evidently made to bring before our people, more and more, the whole teaching of the Church's year. The recurring seasons of that year are designed by her to set forth, one after another, all the great verities of the Christian faith, and we of the clergy cannot be too thankful for the fact, that the proclamation of these has not been left by our Church entirely dependent upon our skill, or even our faithfulness in the pulpit; but that she herself is preaching them to the people every year, and all the year round.

The number of candidates for confirmation is slightly, though not largely, on the increase. It is still, however, far below its proper proportion to the Church population of the diocese. I know how many reasons there are for this, the saddest and most disheartening of them being, I fear, the commonest of them all—the lack of family religion. How can the pastor hope to be largely successful in urging the young to make the vow that devotes them to a godly and a Christian life, or how can he be sanguine of their keeping it, when he knows that all the influences

Confirmation.

of the home are teaching them to devote themselves to the service of the world, the flesh, and the devil? I am not hopeful, therefore, of a large increase in the number of those confirmed, until there come a large revival of practical godliness in the homes of our people. Let us remember, however, that confirmation is in itself a powerful means to this end. The time of preparation for it is a precious seed time, which must, if we sow in faith, bring forth its fruit in due season; though that season may not come in the lifetime of the sower. Our work amongst the young must, for most of us, be work for our successors; let us be willing to labour and that other men should enter into our labours.

The holding of a confirmation in any parish is, as many of you assure me, a great gain and help to you in your efforts to deepen the spiritual life of your people. I am naturally anxious, therefore, to vary as much as possible the centres of confirmations in the diocese, as well as to increase their number. There are, however, necessary limits to these, not only of the physical strength of the bishop, but of convenience and suitableness of different centres. I cannot hope to hold a confirmation in every parish in the diocese, much as I might wish to do so. I can only entreat the clergy to believe that my desire is to give the benefit of a confirmation to as many parishes in turn as I can, and I shall be always glad to consider the request of any Incumbent in the diocese for a confirmation in his own parish, if he will only have the goodness to make this known to me in sufficient time, before arranging the list for the coming year. After this is made and announced, it is all but impossible to make those changes in it which I am sometimes requested to make.

Our Church schools have greatly profited by the stimulus of the Education Act, and are in a state of efficiency which may fairly compare with those of most other dioceses. They are also, it would appear, fairly supported, if we may judge from the fact that only in ten cases in the last three years have any of our schools been rented or given to School Boards. I earnestly trust that in all such transfers, the caution which I ventured to give in my last charge, as to preserving all that can be preserved for the Church in the way of the use of the school buildings out of school hours, has been observed. The school-room, I need not remind you, has its invaluable parochial uses besides those of education, and as it has been in most cases built by the money of the Church, it is only reasonable and right that its use for these purposes should be jealously guarded.

School Boards.

The number of School Boards in this diocese now amounts to 68, the number of Board Schools to 46; and it is instructive to observe, that in 53 out of these 68, School Boards Churchmen are in the majority, while in fifteen only the majority are Dissenters. As I have never heard of any complaints of unfairness or sectarianism against the School Boards in which Churchmen

predominate, we may fairly infer from this that Churchmen are doing in the diocese, what I have ventured to say in the earlier part of this charge it is their wisdom to do, namely, when they cannot have what we believe to be our own better system, loyally and fairly to join in carrying out the system in which the State invites and gives them place to work for religious education.

As regards our diocesan religious inspection, it is now so all but universally accepted and preferred in the diocese, that I need say nothing to commend it. There are still a few schools in which it is declined; but the majority of our school managers have, I imagine, no wish now to revert to the former system of voluntary inspection, gratefully as they may remember the zeal and self-denial of those of our brethren who gave themselves to it in times past. Our diocesan inspectors report a general and steady improvement in religious knowledge in most of our schools, and a general willingness on the part of school teachers and managers to co-operate with them. This good-will of our school teachers is all important; indeed, it is essential to the success of any system of religious inspection. They have a power of passive resistance which might prove fatal to it, and their sympathy and co-operation in it give proof that they recognise the help it gives them in the religious training of their pupils.

Diocesan In-
spection.

We have lost since last visitation the invaluable services of the Rev. J. B. Harrison, our Diocesan Inspector for the Archdeaconry of Leicester, though I am thankful to say that we still retain him as an Incumbent in the diocese. I have, with the assistance of the Archdiaconal Board of Education, selected a successor, for whom I can express no better wish than that he may follow in the steps of his predecessor.

On the subject of Sunday-schools I do not propose to address you at any length, as you would not desire that I should forestall the discussion on the report of the committee on this subject appointed by our diocesan conference of last year. The statistics, however, which they have collected will be of permanent interest, and as I have obtained them by the favour of the committee I place them on record here. Answers to a paper of queries issued by the committee have been received from 505 schools. From 61, I regret to say, no information has been obtained. May we hope that those Incumbents who have declined to supply this information may reconsider their decision, and give us before the meeting of conference next year the means of completing our diocesan statistics on a matter of such interest and importance as this? Need I assure them that there is and can be no power on the part of the committee or of the conference to interfere in any way with their management of their schools? They can but offer recommendations founded on the information or the suggestions they may receive, and these recommendations it is of

Sunday-schools

course free to every Incumbent or school manager to accept or reject as he may think fit.

It appears from the returns which have been received that the total number of scholars attending in 505 schools is 49,977; of whom 24,690 are males and 25,287 females, showing a degree of equality in the attendance of the sexes which I was not prepared to see, and which contrasts strikingly and suggestively with the great inequality in this respect in the numbers of those presented for confirmation. The proportion of this number to the population of parishes, omitting fractions, is 1 in 10, and taking each arch-deaconry separately it would appear that in the arch-deaconry of Northampton 1 in 9 attend Sunday school; in that of Oakham 1 in 8; and in that of Leicester 1 in 11.

Of these scholars, 1,295 males and 1,750 females, or a little more than one-sixteenth of the whole, are over sixteen years of age; a fact which shows us the point at which our efforts at retaining hold of the young, whether in the Sunday-school or in some other way, need to be directed and strengthened.

The total number of teachers in these 505 schools is 1,757 males and 3,001 females; classes for the instruction of these are conducted by the clergyman in 102 parishes, and the returns also show that in many parishes help and advice are given to the teachers by means of publications. There is one other fact noticed in this report which I observe with especial thankfulness; it is that children's services are now held in 135 of our parishes. In every parish where this is the case, the Church has made a great step towards remedying a serious evil and danger in our English religious life—the weariness of the children's Sunday.

I fear that in our zeal to utilise the Sunday to the utmost for the religious training of the young, we sometimes forget how sore that weariness may be for the child, who spends the greater part of the day between lessons in the Sunday-school, not always attractively taught, and long services and sermons in church, not specially calculated to interest the childish mind or heart, and then we wonder that so many of our young people, as soon as they are free to do so, forswear Church and Sunday-school together, and that for life. And yet the Sabbath was meant for these too. They have surely their share in that day of rest, which is their Lord's day, who willed that the little ones should come unto him, and who blamed those who would have kept them from Him. He is a faithful pastor then as well as a wise one, who strives to make Sunday a happy day for the little ones of his flock; and certainly he helps to do this who gives them on that day, a bright, brief, hearty service, such as they can understand and enjoy, and which may make their Father's House for them a pleasant place, which having once learned to love, they may in after years not willingly forsake.

Accompanying the returns to their queries much information

of a general kind and many practical suggestions have been given to the committee, and they have in their report made recommendations which will, I have no doubt, prove of great value and interest. All that it seems necessary for me to say further on this subject now is, that it seems to me clear, that while our Sunday-schools give the same evidence of zealous and successful labour as do our other departments of Church work, there is room for improvement in general method and system, and especially in the all-important work of the selection and the training of the teachers.

The appointment of this committee and of others on subjects of practical importance, is one of the happy results of our diocesan conferences. Year after year I feel the value of these, and the help and strength they give in the government of a diocese. They give the Bishop just what it is so important and yet so difficult for him otherwise to obtain, the expression of the mind of the clergy and laity of the diocese after full and open discussion and debate. The decisions at which such representative assemblies arrive are certainly far better entitled to be regarded as the voice of the Church in any diocese, than are those party manifestoes and declarations so much in vogue amongst us of late years—the signatures to which, given often hastily and without ever having heard the other side of the question, often, too, under considerable pressure as a token of party allegiance, really indicate little more than the relative strength or zeal of the parties which originate them—and which unfortunately too often commit those who sign, especially amongst the younger clergy, to positions and opinions from which they find it difficult afterwards to recede, however much they may wish to do so. I am as desirous as any one can be of hearing the true voice of the Church; but I think we are far more likely to hear it in the deliberate utterances of our representative assemblies than in the discordant party cries which are so constantly echoing and re-echoing all around us.

I trust, too, that the clergy and laity are realising the advantages of these free conferences in which they meet, to learn each other's minds, and to gain, what men will never gain so long as they keep aloof from one another, a spirit of mutual respect and tolerance, such as I am thankful to say our conferences have largely displayed.

You will see from this review of Church work and life in this diocese for the last three years, how much cause there is for encouragement. Spite of many drawbacks and defects, and of much opposition, we have made real and steady progress; and this is still more apparent when we extend our retrospect over the larger period of ten years during which I have known this diocese. As I look back on that period now drawing to a close, I can see 168 churches restored or rebuilt, 282 schools built or enlarged, and an expenditure on these two departments of Church work alone of

Diocesan Con-
ferences.

Progress of the
Church during
the last ten
years.

£402,000, or at the rate of more than £40,000 a year. I can see the mischievous exclusiveness of the pew system giving way to free and open churches; our Church schools passing safely through a crisis of legislature that at one time was thought to threaten their existence, but which has really resulted in making them more effective than ever; diocesan religious inspection established and accepted; diocesan conferences gathering the clergy and laity together, and helping to weld the diocese more and more into a strong and organized whole, instead of a weak and unwieldy collection of isolated parishes; the clergy drawing together more closely for brotherly counsel and co-operation; the help of the laity more freely sought and more fully rendered; the Church growing daily more powerful and respected in our great towns, where not so long ago she was weak and despised for her weakness; in one word, tokens on every side of renewed and vigorous and successful life in the Church. As we see these things, brethren, may we not thank God and take courage? May we not recognise, not boastfully, when so much yet remains to be done, but humbly and thankfully, the work which the Church has done, the progress she has made even in that comparatively brief period?

And now as we look back on that period, let me ask you, or rather let me entreat you to ask yourselves each one this question: Can I honestly say that I have been seriously hindered in my share of this great work by any existing rubric, law, or canon of the Church, or by any legal interpretation of these? Can I say, for instance, that I should have been more successful in winning souls for God, or in building up His people in their most holy faith, if I had been free to preach in dissenting chapels; or if I had been allowed to wear a green garment instead of a white one, or to place thirty-six lighted candles on the holy table instead of two unlighted ones, or to perform, indeed, any one of those ceremonies which recent decisions have pronounced unlawful? Or as regards those relations between Church and State which so many are declaring just now to be so grievously hindering the work of the Church, on which of these can any one of you lay his hand and say, This has really crippled me in my work as a parish priest; that has really prevented me from doing what I felt to be important for the spiritual good of my people? And if, as I suspect, the answer from the most successful workers amongst us would be, I have felt no such hindrance; I have often wished that I could reach in my work to the limits allowed me by the Church, but I have never felt that to do it efficiently I need pass beyond these—if there be still ample room within those limits for more work than we can well do, and if within those limits such good work has been done, let me ask you to consider seriously what is the real worth of those complaints which we hear all around us from friend and foe, of an enslaved Church,

hindered by the fetters of the State from all the great work which she might do if these were once broken?

Look round upon what the Church of England has done during the last thirty years at home and abroad, and ask yourselves, Is there any religious body in Christendom that has done more in the same time, of the true and proper work for which Churches exist, than this enslaved and fettered Church of England? Let us ask this question too: Has there, during that period, been any one measure for which the Church has unanimously asked the Legislature as being essential to its spiritual work for the nation, which it has not obtained? Beginning with the revival of Convocation, and ending with the increase of the Episcopate, what is that reform, that improvement, which the State has refused whenever it has seen that the Church was really united and in earnest in asking for it? And if this be so, let me entreat you to consider seriously whether we would show our good sense or our wisdom, in joining those who are just now shrieking and gesticulating for liberty, and declaring that if it be not granted speedily the Church must at all hazards break the chains with which the State has loaded her. Observe that I do not say, I do not think, that there is nothing in the existing relations between Church and State which is capable of being amended, or may need readjustment. It were hardly possible that time, "which is the great innovator," should have made no such changes—both in Church and in State—since the sixteenth century, as should call for corresponding change in the relations then established between them. Such changes have undoubtedly taken place, and Churchmen are therefore perfectly justified in seeking for such readjustments of their union with the State as may fairly represent this altered condition of things; and what is more, I believe that if they seek for them in a calm and temperate spirit they may obtain them. But what I protest against, is this feverish impatience for great and sweeping change, to be obtained now and at once; this crying up on every side of some heroic remedy which is to save the Church if only it be taken without delay; this unthankful forgetfulness of all the work the Church has done, and all that she might do, even if these boasted remedies were never tried, or these great organic changes never effected. Let us pause, my reverend brethren, before we risk the Church of England, as she is, with all her faults and defects, in the attempt to realise all at once some heated vision of what she might, or ought to be; let us rather consider how large may be the sacrifice of personal and party preference, of conviction even in things non-essential, which may be called for at our hands, for the sake of preserving the peace, and with the peace the efficiency and the safety, of the Church of England.

There are however, doubtless, practical reforms and amend-

ments in the Church for which we ought to strive; for some of which we need, but for many of which we do not need, the help of the Legislature, but are quite capable of effecting them for ourselves.

Reforms and
Amendments.

On former occasions I have set before you some of these, both as regards our own diocese and the Church at large, and I now proceed to mention some others which seem to me to be both desirable and fairly practicable, if we can only agree in attempting them.

In the first place, then, let me say, that while the idea of diocesan organization is fairly gaining ground amongst us, and we are all more and more realising that there is such a thing as diocesan as well as parochial work for the Church, we have not I fear yet accepted generally the conclusion which naturally follows from this, that for the maintenance of diocesan institutions we need a well-organized system of diocesan finance. The idea of parochial finance is of course familiar to every good parish priest, and such an one I am sure understands that it is not safe to trust any parochial object of prominent importance merely to the chance of the charity sermon or subscription list; he has learned the value of systematic and regular collection of the contributions of all in the offertory, the regular laying by on the first day of the week by every man, which is the true scriptural principle of giving to the Church. Now, surely the principle which is found so valuable in the parish is equally so for the diocese.

Diocesan
Finance.

We need for diocesan objects a diocesan offertory, just as we need for parochial objects a parochial offertory. It is not safe or wise in the one case, any more than in the other, to trust solely to the uncertain and variable source of the subscription list. Subscribers die or leave the diocese, new ones must be found by the unhappy secretary of the diocesan society, and large cost must be incurred in circulating appeals which few take the trouble to read; while, after all, these efforts only obtain the subscriptions of the few wealthy and more prominent members of a diocese, and fail to gather in the small contributions of the many, who indeed, for the most part, never hear of these needs of the diocese, and have no opportunity given them of aiding them. The consequence is that every now and then some important diocesan institution is on the verge of extinction, and is only saved by the spasmodic efforts of some zealous supporter. That I am not speaking at random in this matter some of our diocesan secretaries well know. Diocesan inspection, for instance, in one archdeaconry in this diocese has narrowly escaped this peril, if it has escaped it.

Now it has been proposed and agreed to, as you are aware, in two successive meetings of our diocesan Conference, that we should endeavour to prevent these dangers to our diocesan insti-

tutions in the same way as other dioceses have done ; namely, by a regular and methodical system of collections all over the diocese for certain diocesan objects ; the rural deanery being in each case the local association for the purpose, and the clergy giving an annual sermon for it, and paying to the rural dean as treasurer such sums as they might receive, and the committee of Conference receiving and distributing the money so obtained, for the purposes to which the Conference has assigned them.

I am aware that while this plan has been adopted in many rural deaneries, it has not yet made as much way as I could wish in the diocese. The idea still seems largely to prevail, that this is an attempt at dictating to the clergy what charities they shall advocate, or that it is in some way intended to supersede existing societies or institutions in the diocese. Let me once for all declare that such an impression is utterly erroneous. This finance association is really and simply a diocesan collector, receiving the money of those who are willing to give it, and paying it over to the association or institution to which it is assigned by the donor. The only exception to this is in the case of the augmentation of small benefices, for which no association already existed, and which therefore has been taken in hand by the committee of Conference itself. And as to dictation to the clergy, how is it possible that there can be such a thing, where every clergyman is and must be free either to decline to advocate any of these objects, or to select any one of them which may specially commend itself to him, and they can hardly, I should have thought, be all of them distasteful to any one.

Let me urge on the clergy of this diocese, then, to dismiss once for all from their minds all thought whatsoever of interference or dictation in this matter, and to regard this proposal in its true light, as an attempt to place on a broad and secure basis institutions, the value of which I am sure will be generally admitted, and which have been approved of by the Conference of the diocese. Let me beg of you, then, that you will give this experiment, if it were only as an experiment, a fair trial, and that you will grant a sermon once a year in each of your churches for these united diocesan objects, or for any one of them that you may specially prefer.

One of the objects to which funds thus obtained are to be devoted is the augmentation of small benefices. Let me plead earnestly for this. It is not right, it is not decent that there should be, as there are, in the ministry of our Church, clergymen in the receipt of an income which is below the wages of many of our artisans. "The labourer is worthy of his hire." "They that preach the gospel should live of the gospel." Is an income of eighty or one hundred, or even of a hundred and fifty pounds a year a reasonable "hire" for educated Christian gentlemen who

Augmentation
of small beno-
fices.

labour for the wealthiest laity in Europe? Can he be said to "live" who has no more than this for his livelihood and that of his family? Is it creditable to us that this should be so, or that being so, we should make no effort to amend it? How is it that this has not been done long since? The laity of the Church are, as I have said, far from illiberal. How comes it that their liberality has not yet found this channel? I grudge no shilling that has been laid out in restoring and adorning our churches, and yet I cannot help feeling how strange a contrast there sometimes is between their rich and lavish adornment and the ill-requited labours of those who serve in them. There must be a reason for this; where are we to find it? It comes, perhaps, partly from the fact that the clergy are naturally unwilling to complain of their small incomes; but mainly, I think, from two other reasons. First, the idea that our Church is a very wealthy body, and that if her wealth were only redistributed there would be enough and to spare for all. This is a mistake which has been again and again refuted. The entire income of the Church, if all put together and divided, would not, it has been calculated, give an average income all round to every one of her ministers of more than £250 a year, and no one, I suppose, would imagine it possible or wise to reduce all clerical incomes to this one dead level of straitened maintenance. No redistribution of the Church's wealth then that could possibly be looked for would sufficiently augment the incomes of the poorer benefices; and if we wait for this before we set about the augmentation we shall wait for ever. Another and a more serious objection is that drawn from the proprietary interests of private patrons and the sale of advowsons. Why, it is asked, should we increase the value of a benefice merely to enable the patron to make a better bargain for it in the market? There is some force, it must be owned, in this argument, and it shows that one of the ill results of our present traffic in livings is that it thus tends to impoverish the Church and the clergy. But, not to say that this can have no application to the case of livings in public patronage, or that it is possible even as regards private patronage to make arrangements which might prevent the augmentation going into the patron's pocket, let us take the case at the worst—let us suppose that when we have in augmenting the living made it saleable, it is actually sold. Have we not even in that case gained for the Church and for the parishioners who are no parties to this sale, a decent remuneration for the clergyman? Have we not given them a better prospect of obtaining the services of a duly qualified minister? And is the fact, then, that a patron may, though it does not follow that he will, enrich himself in consequence of our gifts, to prevent our doing this great and immediate good to the clergyman, the parish, and the Church? Surely if we are to wait to remedy an evil that is in our power to remedy until other evils are remedied that are not yet within our reach, we shall remedy nothing. Let us do one thing, and that the most pressing thing,

at a time. Let us "provide things honest in the sight of all men" by augmenting to a decent living the incomes of our clergy. Let us also set about reforming abuses of Church patronage; and it might be no small help in so doing if we could show that the Church by her contributions to the value of livings had in many cases thus obtained as it were a moral lien upon them, which might entitle her to be heard in her protest against their being made the subject for further sale and barter. But let us not delay the one plain and urgent duty, until the possibly distant day when we can discharge the other. I plead, then, with the laity, I plead with our richer brethren of the clergy, for the augmentation of the smaller benefices in this diocese, and I trust that we shall not rest satisfied until we have secured £200 a year and a house to every Incumbent in it whose income is now below that amount.

In addition to the making proper provision for the sustenance of the regular and settled ministry amongst us, we need greatly some provision for what I may term the spiritual emergencies of the diocese. From time to time in the history of a diocese there come sudden calls upon the Church for efforts of a special kind, which our ordinary parochial machinery was never calculated to meet. The quiet life, for instance, of some half-dozen country parishes is suddenly invaded, as we have lately seen in some parts of this diocese, by crowds of labourers engaged upon the works of some new railway. The clergyman in each of these parishes finds himself suddenly surrounded by a large new population, whose ways and habits of thought and feeling are all as new and strange to him, as he and his Church and parish are to them, and who require, if they are to be dealt with to any good purpose, all the energy, activity, and special aptitude of a specially qualified missionary. And while he is standing dismayed in the presence of such a new and overwhelming field of work as this, or trying to find help of the fittest kind for it, the golden opportunity of winning these souls whom God's providence has thus brought to the very door of the Church is passing rapidly away. The multitude that have gathered round about her must go away unfed, not because she has no compassion for them, but because she is not ready to distribute to them the bread of life.

Or take again the case of the town pastor, where from some cause or other the population has largely and rapidly increased, and who sees his parish suddenly covered with that network of little streets and squares with which we are all so familiar in our large and growing towns; where the newly congregated masses of the people are to be speedily won or altogether lost to the Church, and where the pastor, utterly worn out and borne down as he often is with the effort to minister to a population that already overtaxes his energies, stands aghast at this new demand upon his strength.

Supply for
Spiritual emer-
gencies.

Or let us take the case of an epidemic in town or country, where even with the help of the nurse or the sister, the clergyman finds himself utterly unable to minister to the needs of the sick and the dying; or where he is himself laid aside from his work by sudden and temporary illness, and finds it, as we know so many do, all but impossible to procure at a moment's notice the clerical help that he requires. Such emergencies as these, and they are frequently occurring, cannot always be met at the moment when they occur. They need some provision made before and ready for the occasion. Now if there were in every diocese—say in the cathedral city—a staff of clergy placed at the command of the bishop and ready to go at a moment's notice wherever he might send them, and if these mission clergy were, in the intervals of such more urgent work, to be engaged in study, or in helping in the mission work of the Church in the town where they lived, what a strength the Church would gain by such a readily disposable force of specially trained ministers as this! At present she has all her forces engaged in action; do we not want a reserve from which to send in reinforcements just where they are required? Can we hope to gain this new force for the Church in this diocese? It only needs what we have most at our disposal—money. And I trust that there may be those amongst our faithful laity who will, now that it is put before them, come to the help of the Church in this respect.

Supply of Ministers.

Closely connected with this question of the supply of clergy for special emergencies, is that of the supply of men for the work of the ministry generally. The lack of this is beginning to be seriously felt amongst us. I am constantly hearing from Incumbents in this diocese, both in town and country, of the all but impossibility of obtaining curates; and if this be the case as regards the ordinary demand and supply of the diocese for its existing wants, how are we to hope to meet the growing demands which increasing population and increasing work are ever throwing upon the clergy? The fields of the Church, as we look upon them at this moment, are indeed white unto harvest; must that harvest be left ungathered, or gathered by other hands than hers, because her labourers are so few? What can we do then to meet this crying need of our Church? If we ask the causes of it with a view to remedy them, we find that they are many and various, and some of them I fear not likely to lessen, but rather to grow stronger, in the future. The rival attractions of the many professions and occupations now open to all under our competitive system; the high prizes thus held out as compared with the poorer worldly prospects of the ministry; the early age at which men may enter upon these as compared with that fixed for ordination; the cost of university education; the increasing salaries which incumbents with fixed incomes must now pay for the ser-

vices of curates ; and possibly, too, the spread of sceptical thought and the unsettled state of mind of many of our most promising young men, which makes them unwilling to bind themselves for life by any dogmatic pledge : all these things are against us in the matter of ministerial supply.

Now we may attempt to meet these difficulties, and we are meeting them to a certain extent, in various ways ; by endeavours to assist poorer students for the ministry in their university career ; by theological colleges which enable some to dispense with university training ; or again by the efforts of such societies as the Additional Curates and Church Pastoral Aid to assist incumbents in providing curates ; or of the Curates Augmentation Society in increasing their incomes. I doubt, however, whether all these together will ever give us—they certainly have not yet given us—anything like a sufficient supply of ministers to meet our most pressing demands.

And even if we could hope in these ways largely to increase the number of clergy, it becomes a serious question how far it is safe or right to do so, unless at the same time we make a corresponding effort, and that on a very large scale, for their maintenance. For it must be remembered that every additional curate added to the ministry increases the number of our unbeneficed clergy, and delays the period when they may expect to obtain, in their turn, preferment. The number of benefices therefore remaining comparatively stationary, and the number of clergy being at the same time largely and rapidly increased, must tend to bring about a large amount of clerical distress and discontent, and of scandal to the Church from the spectacle of aged curates whom long years of service have left only curates still. This may, I fear, be regarded as rather a low and secular view of this question ; but so long as human nature is what it is we may not safely overlook it. I can only hope that those who may denounce the secularity of this objection are prepared to meet it, not by a lofty and spiritual disregard of the secular requirements of the clergy, but by an effort to supply them. When they do this, but not until then, it will be safe to disregard the common-sense question, How if you greatly multiply the clergy of the Church are you to provide for them ?

Pressed by these considerations, many whose opinions are deserving of the highest respect are recommending that we should resort for the supply of spiritual aid that we need to what is termed the lay, or more correctly speaking, the permanent diaconate. They propose to admit to the diaconate members of our Church while still retaining their secular calling, and who should, as a rule, not seek for the priesthood, but remain deacons for life. There is no doubt that this would at once relieve us of the difficulty of the maintenance of the diaconate, which now so largely hinders its increase amongst us, and would open up a large mine of

Revival of Diaconate.

spiritual wealth to the Church. Nor can I see anything in it opposed to Scripture or to Church principles. The diaconate would in that case, I believe, much more closely resemble that of the primitive Church than ours does now. I see, however, these difficulties in the way of attempting it. In the first place the strong repugnance to it of the laity, who look upon it as lowering their ideal of an English clergyman, as they have hitherto known him. Whatever may be the real value of this objection, the fact that it is so strongly entertained, seems a reason why the experiment should at any rate not be tried just yet. There is, however, another and perhaps a stronger reason against it, and it is, that if we were to ordain deacons of this class, and at the same time, as we should doubtless have to do, were to continue to ordain those whom for distinction's sake we may term clerical deacons, we should then have, side by side, two classes of deacons, the one devoted entirely to the ministry, and engaging in no secular work or calling—the other still engaged in secular pursuits; and I confess that I cannot regard, without apprehension, the possible rivalries and estrangements likely to arise between these two widely differing sections of the same order, nor the secularising influence of the one upon the other.

Sub-Diaconate.

It seems to me that for the present, at least, we would do well to turn our minds to the other alternative, of largely increasing both the number and the work of the order of lay readers, or sub-deacons, already established amongst us. I would gladly see the number of these lay evangelists much greater than it is at present, and I would give them, as they showed themselves fitted for it, all that work of a deacon, save the ministry of the Word in the parish church and the deacon's share in the administration of the Sacraments, which is set forth in the exhortation to deacons by our Church. In this way we should be largely helping the work of the deacon by an order of sub-deacons, just as the work of the priest is helped by that of the deacon, while the deacon might still be what he really now is—simply a probationer for the priesthood; and in this way, too, we should be preparing the way for trying under the most favourable circumstances, if it ever is to be tried, the larger experiment of the permanent diaconate. It is important, however, if this sub-diaconate is to do its real work of supplementing the ordained ministry, that it should not be regarded as a stepping-stone to it, by means of which men, not otherwise duly qualified, may hope to obtain ordination. Such a view of the office would be very disastrous in its effects—both on it and on the ministry. It would at once limit the number of those who sought the sub-diaconate to those who intended to proceed afterwards to the ministry, and it would tend to that lowering of the standard of qualification for the latter, which is just what we should strive to avoid. I trust, therefore, that those who may

seek this office in this diocese will do so for its own sake, and for the love they have for the work it gives them as lay members of the Church of Christ, and not expect that I shall recognise service in it as a claim for admission to holy orders on easier terms than those required of other candidates. The number of our lay readers as yet amounts only to 30, but I hope, as I have said, to see this number greatly increased, and the order increasingly recognised as one both of honour and usefulness in the Church.

The revival of the true work and office of the diaconate, whether in this or in any other way that the wisdom of the Church may devise, is, I am persuaded, one of the reforms most needed amongst us at this moment. For the truth is, that this office has been almost lost to us by the manner in which we have dealt with it.

Revival of the
Diaconate.

In theory, of course, we fully recognise its importance. Our Church declares that it is to be "held in reverend estimation," as one of those orders of ministers which, "from the apostles' time, have been in Christ's Church." And when she recites, as she does in her service for the ordination of deacons, the history of the first institution of the diaconate by the apostles, she evidently intends to refer us to that, as showing the true reason for the creation of this office, namely, that there should always be an order of men in Christ's Church who should do a particular work, which it was not fit that the presbyters should do. Their special work which they were not to leave for any other, was to be the ministry of the word and prayer. And in order to enable them to give themselves continually to this, the deacon was appointed to discharge all those other and more secular parts of the work of the ministry, which would otherwise distract the presbyter from the more proper duties of his office. Now, surely, if such help is needed by the presbyter from the deacon, it is needed always and everywhere, and not only in some places and for a brief time. If the need for the deacon be permanent and be inherent in the nature of the office and duty of the presbyter, then wherever there is the presbyter charged with the ministry of the word, there should also be the deacon to relieve him from the "service of tables." But how is it that we practically deal with this office, which Scripture and our Church thus declare to be of such permanent value and importance? Is it not the fact that we aim at dispensing with it, or at getting rid of it when we have it, as soon as we possibly can?

When an incumbent seeks for a curate, is it not his great desire to find one in "full orders," that is to say, to do his work as a presbyter, without the help of a deacon? Or if he obtains the services of a deacon, he is impatient until he acquire priests' orders, that is to say, until the office of the deacon is abolished in his parish, which is thenceforth to be ministered to by two priests, neither of whom can truly realise the Scriptural idea of his office,

by giving himself continually to prayer and to the ministry of the Word, because both of them must give themselves largely to all that "work" for which the inspired wisdom of the apostles had provided the order of deacons. So that, in fact, we are guilty of the strange inconsistency of maintaining in theory that the diaconate is always necessary to the Church at large, and of asserting in practice that it is not necessary, is in fact rather unnecessary and undesirable, in each one of those cures of souls, which taken altogether constitute the Church.

And what is the result of this practical absorption of the diaconate into the presbyterate in our Church? Is it not that we find the parish priest everywhere overburdened by the secularities of his position which ought to fall upon that very order of the ministry which he has been so impatient to suppress in his own parish? What diligent and pious priest is there amongst us who does not know how hard it is for him to find time to spare, from making or working all the machinery of his parochial organization, for the study of the Word, for the care of his own soul, and for dealing individually with the spiritual needs of the souls committed to his charge? And is not the reason for this to be found in the fact that the priest is trying to do that which is not the true and proper function of his office, that he is attempting what is indeed truly work for God, but for the doing of which God has provided him with help which he is neglecting to use?

And may it not be that God is teaching us, by this very failure of our most devoted parish priests to do all that they feel ought to be done for their people, to consider whether we are really and truly doing His work in His way, or trying instead to do it in our own; and whether, therefore, this difficulty we are now experiencing as to the supply for the work of His ministry may not be the way in which He is leading us to recover one of His own gifts to His Church which we have almost lost through our own neglect, but which may be ours again if we will only reclaim and use it aright?

Earlier age for
Ordination.

There is, however, a reform as regards our present diaconate, which I am satisfied might be effected with very happy results, and which I am most anxious to see attempted; it is that of reverting to what was the rule of the Church for a hundred years after the Reformation, by fixing the minimum limit of age for ordination to the diaconate at twenty-one, instead of, as it is at present, twenty-three years, leaving that for the priesthood what it is now, twenty-four years. The advantages of this change would, I think, be these:—First, that it would relieve the ministry from the disadvantage it now stands in as regards other careers, which, because they can be entered so much earlier, are drawing away so many young men from us. Next, it would tend to the revival of the real diaconate, because such deacons would not, on this plan, be licensed to preach by the bishop, as deacons now are, as

a matter of course, the instant they are ordained ; but only as they showed themselves qualified for the ministry of the Word. But especially it would meet the serious evil, which I know not how we are to meet in any other way, of the present lamentable want of study and preparation in many of the candidates for the ministry. How great this really is, bishops and their examining chaplains probably only know. Nothing is more common than for a young man, who is applying to a bishop for ordination, to tell him that he has had only time to study divinity since he took his degree three months, or at most six, before his application ; that he has since been "getting up" one or two of the books required by the bishop for candidates for orders, and he has no doubt but that he can "get up" all the other books in time for the next ordination ! Of preparation for the ministry other and better than this he has never so much as thought. Of ecclesiastical history, of pastoral or dogmatic theology, of the contents and history of his Prayer Book, and, alas ! sometimes of those of his English Bible, he is complacently ignorant. He has never once tried to speak in public, nor ever practised the reading of the Liturgy, but is quite ready to make his first attempts in each of these difficult arts at the cost of some much-enduring congregation. And it is on the strength of qualifications such as these that young men seriously propose to themselves to enter on the solemn office and weighty charge of teachers of religion to the people. Is there any profession in the world, save that of the ministry, into which men would dream of trying to enter, while so ignorant of its requirements as this ? What would be said of the heads of the medical profession, for instance, if they admitted men to practise on the bodies of their fellow-creatures as ill qualified as those whom we are expected to admit to practise upon their souls ? Is it any wonder, if young men prepared thus for the ministry go easily over to Rome, or Dissent, or Scepticism ? What ballast of learning or thought have they acquired to keep them from being carried away by the first wind of doctrine, the first plausible argument or advocate that they encounter ? And yet, if we bishops were to raise the standard for the ministry to its proper height—if we were to require, for instance, as we ought to require, that every candidate for it should have completed two years of preliminary study and training, we should only succeed in cutting off, almost completely, the present too scanty supply of candidates, the majority of whom neither would nor could, as things now are, afford the time for such preparation.

Nor is this difficulty really met by our Theological Colleges ; for, valuable as these institutions are as supplementing university training, no one would wish that they should supersede it ; and if they do not, and if our clergy generally are to be what we would certainly desire them to be—university graduates—the same difficulty, as to time for study after graduating, arises respecting the

Theological Colleges, and they can never, therefore, hope to train the majority of our candidates for the ministry.

Now if we cannot, and I fear that we cannot, hope to secure the needful time for study before the ordination of the deacon, the next best thing would surely be to secure it in the proposed interval between his diaconate and his priesthood. During that time I would have his studies directed, as in this diocese they are now in the shorter interval of the one year of the diaconate, by the examining chaplains of the bishop, and he should be periodically examined in the results of those studies, an examination in which our Theological Colleges might give us most valuable assistance.

He would remain, in short, for three years at school, in what would practically be the divinity school of the diocese, before he were admitted to the priesthood. In this way we should combine two things now unfortunately opposed to each other—a somewhat larger supply for the ministry, and a higher standard of training for it. One other advantage, too, would result from this plan, that it would tend to secure three years' probation before any man could be put in charge of a parish, and so prevent the scandal we sometimes see now of a youth of twenty-four, with just one year's experience of his profession, entering on the duties of—it may be a large and important parish which has been "held" for him until he should be "priested!"

Ecclesiastical
Legislation.

This subject of supply and preparation for the ministry naturally leads on from the affairs of our own diocese to some considerations affecting the Church at large, which I am desirous of bringing before you. We may pass rapidly over the ecclesiastical legislation, or attempts at legislation, of the last three years, as presenting little that calls for special note. An unfortunate attempt at settling the Burials question in the House of Lords, by conceding everything for which the Church has contended, has led to what I am sure its promoters had no wish for—its further postponement to what may not prove a more convenient season.

A measure has been introduced this session respecting the insurances of ecclesiastical buildings, which, after being referred to a select committee and amended in many respects in accordance with their recommendations, now lies before the clergy for their consideration. Opinions are largely divided upon its merits. My own incline in its favour, as obtaining for the Church, as her own insurer, those large profits now obtained by insurance companies, and as not in my judgment, in its amended form, unfriendly either to the interests or the liberties of the clergy. This is, however, a point on which the clergy must judge for themselves; they can have the bill if they wish for it, and they will not have it if they disapprove of it. I hope that it may accordingly receive full and careful consideration in our ruri-decanal chapters.

Two bills for the increase of the Episcopate have become law,

giving the Church the additional strength of six new sees. As this was legislation which simply enabled the Church to expend her own money upon increasing her own spiritual efficiency in a way which she felt to be needful, it naturally provoked a certain amount of opposition in Parliament from those who thoroughly understand the fact that the spiritual efficiency of the Church is her best defence against her assailants. The contradictory and unreal arguments urged by these persons show clearly enough what the real motive for their opposition was ; while, on the other hand, the fact that Parliament passed this measure in spite of their resistance may be taken as proving that the legislature is still willing to deal fairly and justly by the National Church, whenever it is fully and fairly informed by that Church of its real wants and wishes.

If the ecclesiastical legislature of the last three years has not been very active, this cannot be said of ecclesiastical litigation during the same period ; that has certainly been rife enough, and may prove fertile enough, too, in results which may need all our patience and wisdom to deal with. There is much, it is true, in our recent legal combats of merely passing interest. Petty technical triumphs or failures in modes of procedure, or questions of rival jurisdiction between courts ecclesiastical and civil, are after all mere skirmishes in a larger contest upon the issues of which they can have no lasting effect. They will settle themselves somehow, sooner or later, and at last some case must come for decision in which no technical flaw of procedure or of jurisdiction can be found, and which will therefore raise broadly and clearly before the Church and the nation the question really at stake, namely, will the clergy of the National Church, or will they not, obey the law as finally interpreted by the Supreme Court of Appeal in causes ecclesiastical? Whenever this question is thus finally and definitely raised, there can be but one of two results : either general submission on the part of the great body of the clergy, with, it is to be feared, suffering or secession of a minority ; or else general resistance by the clergy, followed by separation of Church and State. For that either the nation on the one hand, or the Church on the other, could long tolerate a state of open war between them, when they could terminate it by a separation, is impossible. Sooner or later, then, if our present litigation continues, the issue must be decided which has been raised upon the recent judgment of the Judicial Committee of Privy Council, and which, though temporarily obscured by these smaller questions of procedure under the Public Worship Regulation Act, must ere long emerge in all its clearness and importance. Indeed it is obvious that, whatever the Public Worship Regulation Act may have done to accelerate or embitter this question, it has arisen independently of that Act, and would remain to be dealt with if that Act were repealed to-morrow. For, whatever inferior courts

Ecclesiastical
Litigation.

we may substitute for any now existing, it is clear that these as courts of the realm would be bound to accept the ruling of the highest court of appeal; and if this is to be rejected on principle, so must theirs be too, as indeed we know that decisions of the Court of Arches, given prior to the passing of the Public Worship Regulation Act, have been rejected on this ground alone.

The question, then, which you have a right to ask me at this moment, as your bishop, is, whether I am prepared to acquiesce in the decision in the Ridsdale case, and to advise you to do the same; or whether I am prepared to advise you to resist, and to join you in resisting and defying this judgment. I say to join you, for I fully admit that in such a question a bishop has no right, and ought to have no wish, to sever himself from his clergy. If wrong and injustice are really being done to the clergy or the Church, bishops should undoubtedly be foremost to resist it, and to share with their clergy the sufferings such resistance may bring. On the other hand, when they do not in any particular case take this course, may they not fairly ask to be credited with believing that it is not one that is called for under the circumstances; and that the clergy shall not too hastily assume that the only reason why a bishop has advised them to submit when they think that the Church is wronged, is that though he knows that as well as they do, he is too cowardly and time-serving to stand up as he should do for the right?

The Ridsdale
Judgment.

I venture then to say to you, my reverend brethren, and I confess without much fear of such an accusation at your hands, that in my opinion this recent decision gives no warrant for such defiance as some are now counselling you to offer. Let us consider the reasons alleged why we should defy it. Setting aside such really puerile and unworthy ones as that the court was not unanimous, or that the judges were browbeaten and terrified into giving a judgment against their better convictions, there are, it seems to me, two reasons, and two only, deserving of serious consideration. One is that the judgment so directly contradicts the plain law of the Church, which we have vowed to obey, that we have no choice but to resist it. The other is that, be the judgment good or bad, the court it emanated from had no right to give it, inasmuch as it is a "secular" and "State-made one," and that any interference of such a court with the sacred right of the Church "to interpret her own formularies" is a usurpation to be resisted to the death. Now as regards the first of these pleas, I admit fully that it is valid in *foro conscientie*, not of course in any other court; even they who urge it do not maintain that a man can free himself from the judgment of a lawful court by saying that he thinks it bad law; he can only, if he feels himself bound to do so, resist and suffer for conscience' sake. But surely before he takes this step, with all its consequences not merely to himself but to the peace and, it may

be, to the stability of the society of which he is a member, he should be very clear indeed that he is entirely right, and that the judgment he is defying is entirely wrong. Have we then such an absolute certainty that this is so as regards the Ridsdale judgment? I cannot think that we have.

For what is it that the judges have been called on to interpret? Ambiguity of
Ornaments Ru-
bric.
A rubric for the ornaments of the minister which names no ornament, and describes none; which tells him only that those ornaments are to be retained and be in use which were in use by authority of Parliament some three hundred years ago, and which sends him therefore to search for its interpretation through Acts of Parliament, advertisements, canons, injunctions, visitation articles ranging over many years of the most troubled and unsettled period in our ecclesiastical annals; a rubric every word of which has been made the subject of most learned debate, in which men equally learned and presumably equally honest have taken opposite sides; a rubric for which at this moment it seems there exist no less than six different interpretations,* all supported by arguments more or less plausible; a rubric which in its studied and guarded generality was most probably framed with a view to closing up for the time a dangerous controversy, but of which it was only too truly foretold that its ambiguity would one day breed "debate and scorn."

Now let us ask ourselves, is it after all so very certain that any interpretation of such a rubric as this is so absolutely and unquestionably the true one, that a Christian man is justified in defying the legal tribunals of his country and throwing Church and State into strife and confusion in order to carry it out?

For my own part I must, at the risk of being accused either of great dishonesty or of great stupidity, candidly confess that I have seen no interpretation of this rubric for or against which much might not be said. Undoubtedly there is much to be said for what we may call the ritualistic interpretation of it; but I cannot read the arguments of learned counsel, or the elaborate and able judgment of the court, without also seeing that there is much to be said for the opposite view. Indeed, I am simple enough to think that a rubric which requires the aid of fifteen judges, lay and ecclesiastical, sitting for nearly a fortnight in order to decipher its meaning, cannot be so perfectly clear from all ambiguity as is alleged; and that being so, I am content to have its meaning ruled, not by an unimpeachable judgment, which I believe to be in the nature of the case impossible, but by authority to which I can with a clear conscience submit myself. Now I do not of course expect that all men should see this as I do, I only ask those to whom their own interpretation of this rubric may seem far more certain than it does to me, to consider

* See a pamphlet entitled "Five Counter-Theories to the Ridsdale Judgment." London: Marlborough & Co.

whether something may not fairly and reasonably be said for the other side, and whether they may not therefore in their conscience and for peace' sake submit to a judgment from which they differ.

If, however, the court which gave this judgment had no legal authority to give it; if its existence be a mere usurpation and wrong; what becomes of this appeal for submission in a doubtful case to authority? Are we not in that case free to set its decision aside and follow our own? Possibly so; though even in that case we might do well, in a matter in itself not essential to the faith, to acquiesce, for the sake of peace, in the decision as possibly right *per se*, even though not of binding authority. But is it the case that the Supreme Court of Appeal as it now exists is absolutely without any claim to our submission, not because it may be badly constituted, but because it is "State made and secular?" Has the Church, let us ask, in this country enjoyed for the last three hundred years and more the right that is now claimed for her of "interpreting her own formularies without any interference from the State?" Is it not, on the contrary, the fact that this alleged taint of secularity cleaves more or less deeply to every form in which the Crown has exercised its supreme right of appeal in causes ecclesiastical since the time when, having gained the submission of the clergy in convocation, it obtained from Parliament in the Statute of Appeals the power to name at its own discretion judges of appeal in such causes? And if so, what is it that we are asked to do, but to effect by resistance a reversal of this settlement, and thus to regain for the Church a right of which she has been, as it is said, unjustly deprived by the State? Now the practical question which we have to consider when this proposal is made to us of the clergy is, not merely whether this right truly belongs to the Church, but whether, if it does, the proposed defiance of existing jurisdiction is the proper way of regaining it. What we have to ask ourselves is, whether we who have of our own free will accepted our present positions in a Church which has, for three hundred years and more, acquiesced in a certain relation to the State, are free to turn round upon the State and say that the conditions under which we freely and knowingly placed ourselves are an intolerable wrong and injustice, and that therefore we shall proceed, not to strive to alter them, but to get rid of them by the simple process of breaking them. I cannot think that we are free to do so, still less that we are bound in conscience to do so, and I hold therefore that I am giving no merely servile and cowardly advice to you, my reverend brethren, if I counsel you to continue as regards this particular judgment an acquiescence in those relations between Church and State which the Church of England, and which some of the best and holiest of her sons, have accepted for centuries. Let us reform, or strive to reform, if we think it right and wise to do so, these relations; but do not let us inaugurate our reforms by an

insurrection, unless we can plead before God and man—what I do not see that we can plead in this case—that such an insurrection is a plain and a paramount duty.

But if we are not bound in conscience to defy, now and at once, this judgment of the Court of Appeal, regardless of all consequences, we may allow ourselves time calmly to consider what those consequences may be, and what we are really likely to gain by such defiance either for the liberty or for the peace of the Church.

Let us suppose in the first place that our resistance leads, as it very possibly might, to severance between Church and State; should we in that case have escaped the interpretation by State-made courts of the formularies of the Church? Certainly not, so long as the property or the civil rights of a single citizen might be involved in such interpretation. Let us suppose, for instance, that we were to-morrow what is called a Free Church, and that a clergyman of this Church were to repel, as a clergyman lately did, a citizen from the Holy Communion, and that the person so repelled, instead of suing him, as he may now do, in courts ecclesiastical, were to sue him, as he certainly could do, in the civil courts for defamation of character, and that the clergyman were to plead, as a clergyman lately pleaded, that he had only obeyed the rubrics of his Church—can there be a doubt that the courts would claim and exercise the right of inquiring whether those rubrics had really been obeyed by the clergyman? And what would that be but an interpretation of the Church's formularies by a State-made court? The freest of free churches then, it would seem, cannot hope to escape this power on the part of the State thus to interpret the very innermost rules of its spiritual discipline. There is, indeed, one kind of Church, and one only, which can hope to escape this, and that is an Established Church. The Crown may, if it think fit, delegate the whole or any portion of its appellate jurisdiction to the National Church. It has done so, for instance, in the case of the Established Church of Scotland. But this is a right conferred by compact with the State, and the Scotch Kirk possesses it because, if I may use the expression, it is more established even than ourselves. It is, therefore, no paradox to say, that to retain its connection with the State is the only way in which any Church can ever hope to obtain this much-coveted right of interpreting in the last resort its own formularies, and that those who most deprecate secular judgments in spiritual things, should of all others be slowest to sever that connection.

There is, indeed, a mode of escape from State interference, not for the Church, but for the individual clergyman, by adopting the principle of Congregationalism pure and simple. The clergyman may, if he pleases, make himself the hired servant of his congregation, appointed and paid by them, and dismissible at their plea-

sure. In that case, doubtless, there would be nothing for the State to adjudicate upon if he and his congregation were to differ. They would anticipate any such interference, simply by declining to retain his services as soon as they disliked his ritual, or his doctrine, or himself. And this is really what some of our clergy are proposing at this moment, when they are demanding that whatever ritual they adopt, "they shall not be molested" for it, so long as their congregations are satisfied with it. For what is this but a demand to substitute the will and choice of the congregation for the law of the Church? Of course at this moment this is an exceedingly convenient arrangement for the clergyman, who is protected from the power of the congregation by the legal rights secured to him by the law which he is setting aside in their name. But a position such as this, which combines at once all the privileges of law with all the sweets of lawlessness, is obviously one which could not be maintained in a disestablished and disendowed Church, where the congregation would be the paymasters, and where the clergyman would assuredly learn before long, that it is one thing to persuade a congregation of whom he is legally independent to join him in defying the law, and quite another thing to persuade a congregation on whom he is dependent to acquiesce in his defying them. When that time comes, if it ever does come, some of those who had been busiest in bringing it about might find the little finger of a congregation heavier than the hand of the most tyrannical of bishops.

But let us suppose, on the other hand, that by agitation and resistance we obtain for the Church of England this right of interpreting, in her synods, her own formularies—let us see what would be the result. Would it give us peace? Not if we are to believe the declarations of some of those who are demanding it, that they would not submit even to the voice of our Church in her synods, unless with the reserve that she shall interpret all her formularies according "to Catholic usage," and that if she does not in their judgment do this, they will defy her voice as resolutely as ever they did that of the Privy Council; that if, for instance, Convocation were to join with Parliament in forbidding vestments, it would be the "duty of Catholics not to submit nor secede, but to resist." But waiving this difficulty, and assuming that the living voice of the Church in her judicial capacity would be loyally obeyed by all her clergy, how would this new state of things affect the present liberties and rights both of laity and of clergy? And first as regards those of the laity. The clergyman who is placed over his parishioners without any assent on their part, and who thereby acquires over them rights, "secular and State-made" as well as of a spiritual kind, is, as we know, bound to minister the discipline of Christ to them "as this Church and Realm have received the same." How long do we suppose would the laity of the Church endure, that in any case where the question

arose whether the clergy were keeping this compact, that question should be left for the clergy alone to decide; the Realm, which now represents the laity, having handed them over absolutely to the will and discretion of a purely clerical assembly? How long would it be before the laity would demand that if Convocation is to have the same rights as the General Assembly of Scotland, it shall be on the same conditions, namely, that the whole Church shall be from first to last thoroughly leavened in government and discipline with the lay element? Now this complete and radical change in the Church of England might be a good or a bad thing; but it is a thing which would, in the event we are speaking of, certainly come to pass; and I greatly doubt whether it is a change which many of those who desire to make Convocation into the final court of appeal have fairly contemplated.

But how would it be as regards the liberties of the clergy? The voice of the Church in her synods means, for all practical purposes, the vote of the majority in Convocation. Have the clergy fairly considered how far they are prepared to hold their benefices on the tenure of the votes of the majority in an assembly in part at least elective, and necessarily subject to those party influences which enter into every popular assembly? Is a body of this kind really the best fitted for calm and impartial judicial inquiry? Lay judges, we are told, are liable to be swayed by party bias; are ecclesiastical judges always so free from this? Bishops, it is said, are unduly swayed by the voice of public opinion; are elective and popular assemblies always insensible to this influence? And if they are not, may it not be that this new court of appeal might bring us of the clergy in the end no more of liberty than it might bring to the Church of peace? A free Church and a free clergy, it may be well for us to remember, are by no means identical terms. Free Churches have, indeed, been well described by one of their advocates, as institutions, one of whose greatest merits consists in this, "that the majority can always turn out the minority." Now if the clergy, having fairly considered all these things, are prepared, nevertheless, from a strict sense of duty, to brave them all in order to obtain this right which they claim for the Church, well and good, let them do so; but let those, on the other hand, who may not hold this case of conscience to be so very clear, fairly weigh all the consequences of this new agitation they are invited to join in before they commit themselves to it.

But is there no way out of our present distress, save this of revolutionising the Church of England? Have we not, as regards at least the present subject of our disputes, a much simpler and safer way, and one that has been at hand for us any time within the last four years? Our recent litigation would have been impossible but for the ambiguity of this ornaments rubric. If that had

Revision of Rubrics.

been clear and definite, there could have been no room for law suits to ascertain its meaning. Why should we not make it so? The State not only allows but invites us to do so. The Public Worship Regulation Act was never intended to enforce the rubrics as they are. At the very time that it was passed, the State gave to the Church the opportunity it asked for of amending these. Why should we not then long since have availed ourselves of this opportunity? Why should we not have agreed that the Church in Convocation should state plainly and definitely what ornaments her ministers should use? If she wishes for some distinctive eucharistic dress, let her name it. If for the surplice only in all ministrations, let her prescribe it. If for the black gown in the pulpit, let her say so. If this were done, the machinery of the Public Worship Regulation Act and the Privy Council might rust disused for want of material on which to work. Until this is done, this machinery or any other we may devise will never lack occupation. If we will have rubrics that need lawyers to interpret them, we may expect law suits to the end of time. If we desire to escape litigation we had better resort to wise and definite legislation.

And can we imagine any more humiliating or more dangerous position in which the Church can approach the State than this, that after we have been invited to settle our differences by defining and settling our own laws in some reasonable and charitable fashion amongst ourselves, we should, when the time for doing this had expired, come to Parliament and say, "We have done nothing of the kind; we have trimmed and altered a few minor rubrics here and there, which no one cares seriously about, but those which are the real cause of our troubles, and for dealing with which letters of license were really given us, we have been afraid to touch?" And what was it that until very lately hindered us from making this attempt? The fear, forsooth, that if we altered these rubrics we might "break our continuity with the Catholic Church!" or lose our Catholic heritage! Has it then come to this, that members of the great historic Church of England, linked as she is to primitive antiquity by the great deep moorings of creeds and sacraments and word and ministry, really fear that she would drift away from these if she altered the dresses of her ministers? Is it true that we hold on to the primitive Church only, as it were, by the skirts of her garments; or can there be any portion of our Catholic heritage more clearly ours than our right "as a particular or National Church to decree and alter rites and ceremonies not ordained of God," as we may think fit, "provided only all things be done to edifying?" The truth is, and we must confess it with some sense of shame, that what really has hindered us in this matter, for a long time, was our divisions and party strifes. So long as a decision in the courts was pending, and that one party amongst us looked to it to sustain a victory,

and the other to reverse a defeat, both extremes joined in deprecating any revision of the ornaments rubric. Now that this decision has been given and all hope from further litigation is almost at an end, I am thankful to see a better and a wiser spirit prevailing. The Lower House of Convocation of the Province of Canterbury has agreed, by a very large majority, to a recommendation that the distinctive eucharistic dress now legal in cathedrals may be worn, with permission of the bishop, in parish churches. And if this be, as I trust it may be, agreed to in the Upper House of our own province and in the sister province of York, we may have peace. The voice of the Church will at last have spoken for the clergy, and the great body of the laity would, I am persuaded, be only too glad to close this miserable controversy by anything like a reasonable and moderate compromise. It is in this course and this only that I see any hope for us of escaping from our present troubles, and I trust that there is enough of courage and common sense and charity left amongst us to enable us to take it. Meanwhile, let me draw your attention to the utterance in this question of ritual observance given by the bishops who took part in the recent Lambeth Conference; and let me remind you, in so doing, that this utterance was agreed to unanimously in an assembly, the majority of whose members had no interest in upholding the jurisdiction of any English court of law. The decision then unanimously come to was "that no alteration from long-accustomed ritual should be made, contrary to the admonition of the bishop of the diocese."

I cannot but hope that the principle thus affirmed, reasonable surely in itself, and certainly in accordance with Catholic principles of worship, may commend itself to the general acceptance of the clergy of this diocese. You will observe that it does not affirm that no change in the existing ritual in any parish is to be introduced without the previous sanction of the bishop. It only declares that these are not to be persevered in against his admonition; that is to say, it only asks that in a question of expediency and edification, the clergyman should be willing to submit his private and individual judgment to that of him who is set over him in the Lord. Am I asking too much then, even of the most determined opponent of the late judgment of the Privy Council, if I ask him to accept instead this purely spiritual judgment of so many bishops of the Catholic Church? In this diocese such acceptance would happily involve, as yet, no very painful sacrifice on the part of any of the clergy, for I am not aware of any instance in which a clergyman of this diocese has felt it his conscientious duty to introduce any ceremonial forbidden by the judgments of the courts. If then I should ever feel called upon to admonish any one of you not to do this, I should only be asking him to continue, for peace' sake, that forbearance which

Recommendation of Lambeth Conference as to Ritual.

he had hitherto practised of his own accord. And I am bound to add—and I do so readily and gratefully—that my ten years' experience of the government of the clergy of the diocese, leads me to hope that I should not make such request in any case in vain.

Comprehensive-
ness of our
Church.

To return, however, to the suggestion which I have made above, that our ritual disputes should be settled by some reasonable and charitable compromise, embodied in some distinct and definite rubric on the points in dispute. I have further to observe, that if such compromise is to be really lasting, if it is to be anything but a patched up truce, agreed to in mere weariness of strife for the present by two contending parties in our Church, and sure to be broken again ere long, it must be accepted on both sides loyally and frankly as right in principle, and not as a matter of expediency merely. That is to say, it must be recognised on both sides that the Church is right when she aims at retaining within her pale both those two great parties which have always existed within it; that her comprehensiveness is not a mere historical accident or a political necessity of her position, but a great and important principle which it would be not merely impolitic but wrong for her to surrender. If we do not recognise this, peace between these two great parties is impossible, for if either party believes that its opponents have really no lawful place in the Church, and that their presence there is due only to her weakness or her unfaithfulness, then it is bound, in faithfulness to her, to seek for their expulsion. Neither party can or ought to be content so long as what they believe to be heresy is sheltered within the Church, and they will and must therefore do all in their power, the one to expunge from the Prayer Book all the "remaining germs of Popery," and the other all the "unfortunate leaven of Puritanism" which the Reformation, as they believe, has left there. And so the contest will sooner or later be renewed, if not about ritual then about doctrine, if not in the law courts then in pulpit and platform, in Church Union and Church Association, until either one side or the other does triumph, or until the Church, as is far more likely, is torn to pieces by their strife. Meanwhile another and a serious evil arises from this way of looking at the comprehensiveness of our Church as a misfortune and defect and not as a merit. It is that many of her members grow dissatisfied with her position and weakened in their allegiance to her. They begin to doubt whether a Church which includes so many differing opinions, which leaves so many questions open, and which speaks on others with such guarded caution and apparent want of dogmatic clearness, can be really faithful to her great office as the *Ecclesia docens*—of setting forth the whole truth for her children; and whether, therefore, they are not bound to seek or make for themselves some Church which shall be less comprehensive but more united. And accordingly we see, from time to time, her sons rising up and leaving her;

some for the last new schism which splits itself from her *totus teres atque rotundus*, perfect as yet in its internal unity, and quite satisfied that it has carried away with it the whole truth in all its simplicity and perfection ; others for the older and larger schism of the Church of Rome, which boasts that she too is free from the taint of comprehensiveness, that she possesses the whole truth perfectly and dogmatically defined, and that she is therefore at unity within herself, as we of the Church of England can never hope to be. And as these leave us they tell us in parting that this Church of England is but a Babel of contending parties and sects : that she has no word of definite teaching with which to still this strife within her own bosom, and that they have been driven from her by their desire for what they have at last attained elsewhere—unity and peace.

Now let us do justice to this feeling on the part of those who leave us. It is a very real and a very powerful one, and it has this element of truth in it, that unity is a note of the true Church, that it is what our Lord prayed for in order that His Church might thereby manifest His mission to the world, and that a Church which has it not and desires it not cannot be truly His. Nevertheless it might occur, one would have supposed, to those who think of leaving us for our supposed lack of it, that there might be some flaw in their idea of unity. For if this consist in freedom from internal dissensions secured by absolute dogmatic teaching on all questions, the argument against us because we have it not is equally valid against Christianity itself ; it is indeed the favourite argument of the sceptic against Christianity, which he declares cannot be in possession of any real and definite truth, or Christians would long ago have ceased to wrangle about it. If we are to leave the Church of England, then, because she is a Babel, how can we remain in that larger Babel of Christendom which includes her with all her contentions, and also all those other Christian communities from whom she differs, with their contentions too ?

Or again, might it not have occurred to these seekers after unity, that taken by itself it is absolutely no test whatsoever of truth ; that there may be a unity of error as well as of orthodoxy ; that Judaism, for instance, and Islamism display this quality of unity as strongly as Christianity, and even more strongly ; and that, therefore, before we accept the unity of any Church as the reason for our submission to it, we are bound to inquire into the truth of those doctrines in the belief of which its unity consists ? Or again they might remember that before they can enter the Church which is to give them peace by forbidding for ever that use of private judgment which they regard as the cause of all our strife, they must stake their whole faith in her and her teaching upon one supreme act of that very private judgment which they are ever after to resign ; for that they can never be more sure that

True Unity possessed by our Church.

the Church of Rome is the true Church, or even that unity is a note of the true Church, than they are that the act of isolated private judgment by which they arrived at these conclusions was right. All this, however, only shows how powerful and attractive is this idea of unity and of the repose that it brings to minds weary of strife, when it blinds men to intellectual difficulties such as these. Let us consider, then, what is the real worth of this argument from unity, and how far it really tells for or against our own Church.

Unity, as I have said, is not under any circumstances a proof of truth. It may, however, be a presumption for it; it is an inducement at least to our belief in any opinion, that a great many persons unite in holding it; as, for instance, the general agreement of mankind in the belief in a God, or in a future state, has always been regarded as a strong presumption in favour of the truth of those beliefs. But it is clear, that in order to give it this value, unity must be combined with catholicity. The unity of one man in the belief of his own opinions proves nothing; it is the fact that a great many others share it with him that tells, so far as it does tell, in its favour. It is clear, too, that every addition which any one makes to the number of his beliefs so far tends to diminish their catholicity. The more articles we insert in our creed the fewer will be the number of those who receive them all. Some definite articles there must of course be, for there can be no comprehensiveness where there is nothing to comprehend; but every new article necessarily diminishes the area of this comprehension and gains unity at the cost of universality. It is evident therefore that the Church which, in order to settle any dispute within her pale, adds unnecessarily any article to her creed, requiring men to believe as *de fide* any thing which is not of the essence of the faith, has so far diminished her catholicity, though she may thereby have increased her internal unity. She has narrowed herself within a smaller area of belief than that on which she was designed to stand while she invites the world within her pale. She has gained peace within her own borders, but it is at the cost of creating fresh strife and schism in Christendom at large. And she has lessened too the value of her own unity as a test of her orthodoxy, exactly by the amount of schism she has thus created. She can no longer plead for her new doctrine that it is held by the Catholic Church, unless she go farther and claim to be herself the one true Catholic Church, anathematizing all others; and unless, in order to secure the unity she aims at, she further forbid all questioning of her teaching by proclaiming her own infallibility. In that case all her members, so long as they remain her members, must accept her teachings whatever they may be. She has thus secured unity, but it is the unity of an heretical schism, which in order to obtain this specious oneness has severed itself from the true unity of Christendom, and bound

itself by its false claim to infallibility to remain such a schism for ever.

The real question then between our Church and that of Rome is, not whether the latter has secured greater internal unity than we have by defining as *de fide* a number of doctrines on which our Church has declined to give any such definition; but whether she had any right to erect these into articles of faith, and whether, if she had, she has defined them truly. If she has failed in either of these respects, she has lost either truth or catholicity or both in her effort after a false unity; and until, therefore, we have settled both these questions—or in other words, until we have gone over the whole doctrinal controversy between us and Rome—her argument from unity is worth really nothing. It means really no more than that which the newest of new sects might say for itself, that it is united in its opinions, or, in other words, that it believes all that it does believe.

The claim of our Church upon the allegiance of her children is exactly the opposite of this; it is that she has declined to define most of those questions on which Rome has pronounced dogmatically because she holds that she may impose nothing as *de fide* but what is found in Scripture, or may be proved thereby, and therefore that when Scripture is silent she must be silent too, where Scripture has not dogmatized neither may she do so. She is, therefore, sparing of dogma, cautious and guarded in definition, because she knows that Scripture and the primitive Church have always been so. She leaves many questions open, though at the risk of much internal dispute about them, because she believes that she has received no command and no authority from her Lord to close them; and, where she has defined, it has more often been negatively than positively, rejecting some over-definition on the part of Rome as false and as unduly narrowing the bounds of the Church Catholic; but erecting within those bounds no new limits of her own. In so doing she loses the compact unity of a spiritual despotism, but she retains for her children the true Catholic heritage of freedom.

But has she really lost true unity in her faithfulness to true catholicity? Has the Church of England no unity of the faith either within herself or with her sister Churches? As her children gather together in her public worship and recite the creeds which united the Church Catholic for centuries; or hear the word of which that Church has been from the first the witness and keeper; or partake of the sacraments in which they who share them become one body; have they no real, no vital and essential oneness with the Church of all ages? Or when, as lately we have seen, one hundred bishops of the Anglican Communion, representing Churches in all parts of the world, diversely organized, diversely governed, not absolutely alike in rite or ceremony, having used their inherent power to alter these accord-

ing to need and expediency "as happeneth diversely in divers countries," could yet declare with truth respecting all these Churches that, "united under one Divine Head in the fellowship of one Catholic and Apostolic Church, holding the one faith revealed in Holy Writ, defined in the creeds and maintained by the Primitive Church, receiving the same canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as containing all things necessary to salvation, they teach the same Word of God, partake of the same Divinely ordained sacraments through the ministry of the same apostolic orders, and worship one God and Father through the same Lord Jesus Christ, by the same Holy and Divine Spirit who is given to those that believe to guide them into all truth"—was there no evidence then given to the world that Churches may retain the unity of the faith without the aid of infallibility, and keep full communion with each other without the binding force of a visible centre of unity? Was there no proof then given that it is possible for Churches to be at once largely free and largely diverse, and yet largely and truly one? Brethren, let us be satisfied with such unity as this, and let us continue to yield a hearty and loving allegiance to the Church in which we can realise it, and not suffer ourselves to be entangled again by vain dreams of an unreal unity, under a yoke of bondage from which God's good providence has set us free, and to which we cannot return without the sacrifice of that spiritual freedom which it is our privilege to enjoy and our duty to guard.

Loyalty to the
Church.

But if the Church of England be thus largely tolerant and comprehensive, if she grant to her clergy a degree of liberty and independence greater probably than that enjoyed by the ministers of any other religious community, it is clear that she must largely rely upon their loyalty to prevent their abusing their freedom. It is with the Church in this respect as it is with the State. In proportion as the citizens of any country are well affected and law-abiding, laws may be comparatively few and liberty of individual action large; in proportion as men show themselves ill affected to the State, laws must be multiplied and individual liberty abridged. The Church of England has not multiplied her laws, whether of dogma or ritual, because she has reposed a generous confidence in her sons that they would not misuse this confidence to her hurt. They may easily do so if they choose. They may force into her broadly catholic statements of doctrine meanings which may be technically and legally within their limits, but which are foreign to their true spirit and intent. They may warp and strain her few and simple rules of worship, until they make her public services the expression of some private dogma of their own, which even if it be just legally permissible for them to teach in their own words, she has never authorised them to express as hers in her ritual. They may affect in matters

lying outside the legal limits of her public services—in manuals, for instance, of private devotion, with which they supplement these for their own use or that of others, in their books of direction for the spiritual life, in the practices which they recommend or encourage amongst their followers, in the religious phraseology which they adopt—a tone which is not hers, but which is deeply saturated with the thought and feeling of another and a foreign communion. And yet in all this they may be able to say with perfect truth, We have broken no rubric or canon of the Church, we have formally contradicted no one of her Articles ; we have only used as we thought fit our liberty as English Churchmen : why should any one object to or seek to restrain us in this ? And certainly if the clergy of the Church of England owed her nothing but a hard and literal obedience to the exact letter of her laws, this would be a very sufficient answer. It is quite true that for these things no clergyman in the Church of England can be prosecuted and punished. But is this all we owe to our spiritual mother ? Are we morally free as her sons to say and do everything which she has not expressly and formally forbidden us to do ? If she has left us free, is there nothing in her position, in her history, in the whole tone of her teaching and worship, that may show us how far we should restrain ourselves, if we would be truly loyal to her ? What would be said of this plea of mere legality if it were urged in like case in civil life ? What would be thought or said, for instance, of those English citizens who, while England was engaged in a war with some foreign State, were to form themselves into clubs and associations, the members of which should studiously and ostentatiously affect the dress, the manners, the phrases of the people with whom she was at war, and who, when they were reproached for this were to say, We are free Englishmen, we have broken no law in all that we have done, why should you interfere with or seek to restrain us ? Would not the answer be, You may be, as you say, free Englishmen, but you are not acting like loyal Englishmen ; you are not breaking the law, but you are doing something worse ; you are showing your disaffection to the country under the shelter of whose laws you enjoy the liberty you are abusing, and your sympathy with the enemies against whom she is contending. And if while our Church is contending, as she is bound, if true to her own history and her place in Christendom, to contend and to protest against the usurpations and the errors of Rome, certain of her clergy ostentatiously affect as far as they can all that is most foreign in Romanism as distinguished from Anglicanism ; if they persistently show themselves Romanists when they may, and Anglicans only when they must, what are we to think of their plea, “ We are within the letter of the law ; prosecute us if you like, punish us if you can, meanwhile we will do as we please ? ” Can such men be sur-

prised if they are told in reply, you are legally free to do as you are doing, and for that very reason what you are doing shows all the more clearly what your real inclinations and sympathies are? What a man does under official and legal compulsion shows us nothing of his real disposition; that breaks out only where he is free to follow it. "No man," it has truly been said, "is a hypocrite in his pleasures," and if it be your pleasure to go in the direction of Rome whenever you are at liberty to do so, are we uncharitable if we infer that you would do so, if you could, in those other respects in which you are not free? And what is the danger to which the Church is exposed by such action on the part of some of her clergy? It is something, as it seems to me, more to be dreaded than either disestablishment or disendowment; it is the narrowing of her comprehensiveness, it is the loss of that large liberty and independence which her clergy are now entrusted with; or else a violent disruption which would break her into separate fragments, each glowing with the sectarian heat of their separation; no one of them capable in its narrowness and bitterness of discharging for the whole nation that great function of teacher of a national faith which she is fitted to discharge, because within her pale there is room for larger freedom of thought, and more varied expression of devotion, than is to be found in any other Church in the world.

And now, that I may not be charged with merely dealing in general accusations when urging upon the clergy the duty of loyalty as distinguished from mere legality in their obedience to their own Church, I proceed to illustrate and justify what I have been saying by instances in which it seems to me this distinction has been forgotten. And in doing so I pass by those cases, unhappily too many, which, however much to my point, have been described as only isolated and individual eccentricities, mere "fungous excrescences" such as attach themselves to every great religious movement, and which are sure to die and drop off if we leave them alone. I select three forms of speech which seem to be coming into very general use amongst those who would describe themselves as the most advanced of the "Catholic party." And I select these instead of any particular ritual observances, however extravagant or apparently illegal, because I wish to raise no question on this point of legality. I admit at once, and it is part of my argument, that there is nothing illegal in any one of the expressions I am about to cite. They are "the Mass," "the Sacrament of Penance," and "Sacramental Confession." I do those I speak of no injustice, I think, when I say that these terms are specially affected by them just now, and appear in their speech and writings with a significant prominence. Now as regards the first of these: Why, let me ask, should clergymen of our Church substitute for the terms used by her to describe the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, this one of "the Mass," which she has

discarded? It is of all the eucharistic appellations known to the Church the least primitive, the least catholic, and the least significant. It is not found in Scripture nor in the Church of the first three centuries; its true meaning is matter of debate, and is at best a trivial and accidental one. The Greek Church has it not; our own Church deliberately rejected it from her formularies at a time when it was in general use amongst the people, and when its retention would so obviously have helped that quiet transition from old forms to new, which it was both her duty and her policy to effect.* It has on the other hand become, in its later history in this country, whatever it might have been in its first beginnings, a Roman phrase, and associated in all men's minds with the Roman doctrine of transubstantiation, which our Church has formally condemned.

Now it might surely have been expected from a loyal minister of our Church, that he would have eschewed as carefully as she has done the use of a term which she evidently regards as one of those things "the abuse of which could not be taken away, the thing itself remaining." Why then is it revived? Why out of all the rich variety of expressions which are scriptural, catholic, and truly primitive, does any clergyman go out of his way to adopt this one, which is none of these, and which he is not free to use when he speaks the language of his own Church? Because, we are told, he is helping to bring about the unity of Christendom by adopting a term which is used by the whole Latin Church. But might not loyalty have suggested that it is quite as reasonable that Rome should for this purpose adopt our phraseology as that we should adopt hers? And might not Catholic principles have suggested that the union of Christendom would best be obtained, not by one Church adopting with slavish deference the defective terminology of another, but by all Churches reverting to the most catholic and most scriptural expressions, in which case the term adopted to describe the Lord's Supper would certainly not be that of "the Mass?" What, then, I ask, has this term to recommend it to our use instead of those preferred by our own Church? And what are we to think of their loyalty to her, who delight in adopting it?

Again, let us take the phrase "Sacrament of Penance." What is its theological history? It is this: that the Church of Rome in the council of Florence, and finally in that of Trent, thought fit to define the number of the sacraments as being exactly seven,

* The history of the change in the language of our Church in this respect is instructive. In the order of Communion, set forth in the year 1548, the rubric forbids the priest to say "any other rite or ceremony in the *Mass*," &c. In the First Prayer Book of Ed. VI., published in 1549, the Church no longer uses this term as her own; she entitles her eucharistic service as "The Supper of our Lord and the Holy Communion, *commonly called the Mass*." In the Second Book of Edward, published three years later, the word disappears altogether.

neither more nor less. And all of these she declares to be equally true and proper sacraments in all the essentials of a sacrament. Her reasons for adopting this enumeration are certainly not convincing; as, for instance, that it corresponds to the seven planets, or to the seven spiritual diseases of man, or to the seven cardinal virtues, or to the seven kinds of animal sacrifices in the Old Testament. If we adopt it, we do so, therefore, it may be presumed, on her authority alone. Now how has our Church dealt with this question of the number of the sacraments? In the first place she has given in her catechism a definition of a sacrament which expressly excludes those other five commonly called sacraments. In the next place she denies that these are to be "counted as sacraments of the gospel," describing them as being "partly states of life and partly having grown of the corrupt following of the Apostles;" and lastly, she never formally gives to any one of them the name of a sacrament.* It is true that in her twenty-fifth article she does not absolutely deny to these five the name of sacraments in a certain lower and improper sense, because she was aware that in that lower sense the word sacrament was most laxly used in the early Church as applying to anything which could be a *signum rei sacræ*, a sense in which such things as the sign of the cross, exorcism, the polygamy of the Patriarchs, the washing of the disciples' feet by our Lord, and even the divisions of His genealogy, have been called sacraments. In this sense, in which of course there are not seven but seventy, or seven hundred sacraments, these may be allowed to be sacraments, but in no other.

Now, this being so, what should we expect of a loyal minister of our Church as regards the use of this term "Sacrament of Penance?" Would it not be that he should avoid it as carefully as our Church has done, lest by the use of it he should mislead people into adopting the Roman numeration of the sacraments, and with that the Roman errors respecting these other five, and especially respecting this particular one; or that if from a pedantic desire to adopt the earlier and laxer use of the term sacrament he chose to give that term to these other five, he would take care to apply it as freely to other rites and acts, as the early Church did, and to explain in what sense and what alone he thus used it? What, then, are we to think of those who go out of their way to revive this term, and who use it not only without such safeguards and explanations as might prevent its being mistaken and abused, but in such a way as would certainly seem to imply that they had adopted not only the Roman enumeration of the sacraments, but the Roman doctrine respecting these in addition?

* I have said "formally," because in one of the Homilies the term "Sacrament" is applied to marriage; but this is evidently a trace of the old translation of St. Paul's description of it as a great "mystery," and cannot, occurring as it does in a discourse *ad populum*, be taken as the formal expression of the mind of the Church in defining doctrine.

Is this loyalty to the Church of England, or is it a disloyal hankering after the phraseology and the doctrine of the Church of Rome? *

Lastly, let us consider the use of the term—more prevalent even than the other two—"Sacramental Confession." If by this be meant, as some do mean by it, only that perfectly voluntary confession in order to the coming to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper with a quiet mind, which our Church allows, and in certain cases recommends, to those whose consciences are burdened with any special grief, there can be no objection to the use of it, save that it is ambiguous and may be misleading. But if there be meant by it, as undoubtedly there very often is meant by those who use it, confession as one of the four parts of the aforesaid Sacrament of Penance as defined by the Church of Rome, namely, contrition, confession, absolution and satisfaction, then the phrase is distinctly Roman and distinctly alien to the teaching of the Church of England, which has never recognised any such sacrament, nor given to the confession she allows any such sacramental meaning and efficacy.

And if to this use of Roman language on this subject of confession be added distinctly Roman teaching;—if instead of requiring, as our Church does, that the penitent shall first confess his sin to God, and then if need be to his neighbour, making restitution to him where he hath offended, and only in the case where such confession has failed to bring peace to the conscience, allowing of confession to the priest, save in the case of the dying—men are taught that the safer way at any rate, if not the only way, to obtain forgiveness is to bring their sins in the first place to the priest, for that he who confesses only to God may be forgiven, but he who confesses to the priest must be forgiven; if—the penitent being free to limit his confession to the priest to those sins or that sin only with which his conscience is especially burdened, and not being therefore "tied to the numbering of all his sins,"—he is told that he must remember and confess every sin he has committed or go away unforgiven—nay, that the keeping back of any sin from the priest in confession is itself a sin needing confession and absolution;

* Let me quote on this point the opinions of one who certainly will not be accused of ultra-Protestant leanings, and whose words will doubtless have far greater weight than mine with those who have adopted this language. "Neither in this, nor in anything else which I may allege, do I wish to assimilate our language to that of the Church of Rome, or even to use that of our Homilies, when they call Marriage a 'Sacrament;' it would be unnatural and affected and worse. I would rather use the language of the Fathers as to other things than these, lest I should seem to be speaking not in a Catholic but a Romish sense. Yet we need do neither; on the contrary, since the word 'Sacrament' has been misused to place the five rites on a level with the two great Sacraments, and there is no necessity for retaining it, it were wrong and cruel to risk perplexing persons' minds by reviving it. The truth which our Homilies imply may also be conveyed in other ways."—(Letter to Dr. Jelf by Rev. E. B. Pusey, D.D.; 1841.)

if the priest, therefore, claim the right to examine the whole life and innermost thoughts of the penitent before he consent to give him that which the Church has bidden him to give without any such conditions, namely, the benefit of absolution by the ministry of God's holy word; if manuals which distinctly teach the whole Roman doctrine of confession in its extremest form are used in private or circulated amongst the young and the inexperienced; how, I ask, are we to reconcile such teaching and such practice with loyalty to the Church of England? And is it any answer to the accusation of disloyalty in these respects to say, We have after all broken no law of the Church, we are free to use the words, "Mass," and "Sacrament of Penance," and "Sacramental Confession," and even to use or to circulate what teachings on confession we please, so long as we keep within the letter of the law. What is it to you if we choose, for instance, to meet together to "say masses for the departed," or bind ourselves to "labour in bringing young and old to value duly the Sacrament of Penance?" Can you prevent us in any way from doing this, and if not, had you not better let us alone?

Again I ask, Is it really true that clergymen of the Church of England hold themselves free to do, as her ministers, whatever they cannot be punished by her for doing, and that this was all the obligation which they incurred when they took her vows upon them, and gave themselves to her service and ministry?

I cannot believe this. I do not believe it of many of those who are using the language and adopting the practices against which I have protested, and much besides to which I have not referred. I am far from accusing all such of conscious and premeditated disloyalty to our Church. I would rather regard this appeal of theirs to mere legality against the charge of disloyalty, as only their answer to those who threaten them with law; and that in their hearts, many of those who use such language hold themselves most truly loyal to the Church of England. But there may be an unconscious as well as a conscious disloyalty—an estrangement from the spirit and teaching of our Church, of which men are not themselves aware. And this I believe to be the case with many of this school, and especially with many of its younger members who have never carefully studied, if they have ever studied at all, the position of the Church of England in her great controversy with Rome, as set forth by her greatest divines. They have persuaded themselves, or have been taught, that our difference with Rome is only a question "of details," and not of "principles," a matter of words and phrases which admit of explanation and reconciliation; and that as Rome has unfortunately made it impossible for herself to alter her language in the least degree, we must make all the advances to reunion, by altering ours and adopting hers. Their minds are so filled with this vision of a great reunited Catholic Church, that they forget that it is only

through their own mother, the Church of England, that they were born into the Church Catholic; that it is at her hands they have received their Catholic heritage; that her Prayer Book and her formularies are for them her expression of Catholic truth and Catholic worship, as she believes that she has derived these, through the primitive church, from Christ and his apostles; and that if these are not what she claims for them, if she have lost for us any essential portion of that heritage or mutilated the doctrine of Christ, if wherever she differs from Rome she is less catholic, less primitive, less pure than Rome—nay, that if she have quarrelled with Rome only on points of “detail” and matters of phraseology, and not on questions of deep and vital “principle,” her position is utterly untenable, her claims to our allegiance gone, and that she and we are simply in a state of wanton and unjustifiable schism.

They are loyal to a Church of England, but it is to a Church of their own imagining; a Church which has never yet existed in this country; a Church which is not Roman, for it rejects the Roman obedience, nor Anglican, for it accepts nearly all Roman doctrine, nor yet Catholic and Primitive, for its worship and teaching are mainly Mediæval; a Church which dislikes its own history, despises its own ritual, and doubts its own orders; a Church which Rome repudiates, and which England knows not; a Church which assuredly is not the Church of England as she appears in English history, or as she has defined herself in her own formularies. And yet they have come to believe that this, their Utopia, is the very Church of England of which they are now ministers, and to which they have promised obedience. Now strange and all but inconceivable as such a position seems to me; utterly irreconcilable as I believe it to be with true loyalty to the reformed Church of England, I am willing to believe that to others it does not seem so; not the less, however, do I believe it to be perilous for themselves and for the Church: perilous to themselves, as it forces now one and now another of them, in obedience to its real logical necessities, to leave us for Rome; perilous to the Church, as all teaching and practice that is really foreign to her doctrine and discipline must be.

So regarding it, I have spoken words of warning and remonstrance, which will, doubtless, be little heeded by those they most concern; but which may have, I trust, some weight with those who are now listening to me. To those who have not yet committed themselves to teaching or to practices such as those I have been describing—to the great body, may I not say to every one of the clergy of this diocese—I venture to repeat that word of counsel and exhortation which I have endeavoured to make the key-note of all I have been saying in this Charge. Be loyal—thoroughly loyal to the Church in which it has pleased God to appoint your lot in His ministry. Weigh carefully, scrupulously even, her claims

to your allegiance. Consider well, reconsider if you will, her position as opposed to all Papal and Puritan innovation on the one hand or the other; see if her *via media* really be the way of safety and of truth for us; judge with keenest scrutiny too, if her relations to the State be lawful, and further, if they be really at this moment for the spiritual good both of the Church and of the people of England. And if, when you have done this, you can honestly say, as before God, we believe that the Church, whose ministers we are, Established, Reformed, Primitive, Scriptural, as we see her to be, is that Church to which we can, with a good conscience, give ourselves as her servants, then be content not only to abide in her service, but to do her work in her way in all hearty and faithful loyalty. She may not be all that even her most faithful sons may desire for her; but she is and ought to be for us, so long as we remain within her pale, the best and purest Church we know of; and we should be very jealous how we allow scruples as to her full right to all our obedience, or longings after doctrines she does not teach, or practices she does not enjoin, to make us discontented and half-hearted in her service. She needs at this moment the loyal and loving help of all her sons, but chiefly and especially of us of the clergy. I have said, and I believe it, that her future under God depends far more upon what her clergy are and do in this very generation in which we are living than upon anything else. No power or influence from without can do her one tithe of the harm that we can do her, or give her one tithe of the help that we can give her, from within. It is then a grave and a solemn responsibility, brethren, which thus rests upon each one of us. We may, if we choose, and that only too easily and too fatally, hurt the Church by our disloyalty, by our strife and party spirit, or by our sloth and carelessness; in that case we shall have to answer for having destroyed a power for good in this our country and in the world, which, once lost, no human wisdom or effort could ever restore. Or we may, not indeed as easily, not without painful toil and self-denial, not without patience and courage and faithful perseverance in well-doing, not without large sacrifice of personal preference and self-will, but yet completely and successfully, preserve and hand on to those who are to come after us the great trust which has come down to us of the pure faith of the gospel of Christ as it is enshrined in the doctrine and the ritual, and brought within the reach of the people of this country by the organization, of the Church of England. May God give us grace, my brethren, to lay to heart these our great responsibilities, and wisdom and courage faithfully to discharge them for His sake and in His sight.







